

PUBLIC DOMAIN SHORT WORKS - DECEMBER 2015

Compilation by Matt Pierard from works found on Project Gutenberg

A TOAST, by George Santayana
GOD REST YE, MERRY GENTLEMEN, by Stephen Crane
REGINALD'S PEACE POEM, by Saki
THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM, by Rabindranath Tagore
THE LUCK OF THE BOGANS, by Sarah Orne Jewett
YOUTH AND AGE, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge
THE DESTROYER, by William Merriam Rouse
A HUNDRED MILES UNDERGROUND, by Anonymous
CATHERINE'S CAREER, Harriet Jean Crawford
DESERTS OF THE NEW WORLD, by Arthur Mangin
VAIN SUITORS, by Robert J. C. Stead

A TOAST

by George Santayana
from *Poems*, EBook #49721

See this bowl of purple wine,
Life-blood of the lusty vine!
All the warmth of summer suns
In the vintage liquid runs,
All the glow of winter nights
Plays about its jewel lights,
Thoughts of time when love was young
Lurk its ruby drops among,
And its deepest depths are dyed
With delight of friendship tried.
Worthy offering, I ween,
For a god or for a queen,
Is the draught I pour to thee,--
Comfort of all misery,
Single friend of the forlorn,
Haven of all beings born,
Hope when trouble wakes at night,
And when naught delights, delight.
Holy Death, I drink to thee;
Do not part my friends and me.
Take this gift, which for a night
Puts dull leaden care to flight,
Thou who takest grief away
For a night and for a day.

GOD REST YE, MERRY GENTLEMEN

by Stephen Crane

from *Wounds In the Rain - War Stories*

EBook #43706

Little Nell, sometimes called the Blessed Damosel, was a war correspondent for the *New York Eclipse*, and at sea on the despatch boats he wore pajamas, and on shore he wore whatever fate allowed him, which clothing was in the main unsuitable to the climate. He had been cruising in the Caribbean on a small tug, awash always, habitable never, wildly looking for Cervera's fleet; although what he was going to do with four armoured cruisers and two destroyers in the event of his really finding them had not been explained by the managing editor. The cable instructions read:--"Take tug; go find Cervera's fleet." If his unfortunate nine-knot craft should happen to find these great twenty-knot ships, with their two spiteful and faster attendants, Little Nell had wondered how he was going to lose them again. He had marvelled, both publicly and in secret, on the uncompromising asininity of managing editors at odd moments, but he had wasted little time. The *Jefferson G. Johnson* was already coaled, so he passed the word to his skipper, bought some tinned meats, cigars, and beer, and soon the *Johnson* sailed on her mission, tooting her whistle in graceful farewell to some friends of hers in the bay.

So the *Johnson* crawled giddily to one wave-height after another, and fell, aslant, into one valley after another for a longer period than was good for the hearts of the men, because the *Johnson* was merely a harbour-tug, with no architectural intention of parading the high-seas, and the crew had never seen the decks all white water like a mere sunken reef. As for the cook, he blasphemed hopelessly hour in and hour out, meanwhile pursuing the equipment of his trade frantically from side to side of the galley. Little Nell dealt with a great deal of grumbling, but he knew it was not the real evil grumbling. It was merely the unhappy words of men who wished expression of comradeship for their wet, forlorn, half-starved lives, to which, they explained, they were not accustomed, and for which, they explained, they were not properly paid. Little Nell condoled and condoled without difficulty. He laid words of gentle sympathy before them, and smothered his own misery behind the face of a reporter of the *New York Eclipse*. But they tossed themselves in their cockleshell even as far as Martinique; they knew many races and many flags, but they did not find Cervera's fleet. If they had found that elusive squadron this timid story would never have been written; there would probably have been a lyric. The *Johnson* limped one morning into the Mole St. Nicholas, and there Little Nell received this despatch:--"Can't understand your inaction. What are you doing with the boat? Report immediately. Fleet transports already left Tampa. Expected destination near Santiago. Proceed there immediately. Place yourself under orders.--ROGERS, *Eclipse*."

One day, steaming along the high, luminous blue coast of Santiago province, they fetched into view the fleets, a knot of masts and funnels, looking incredibly inshore, as if they were glued to the mountains. Then mast left mast, and funnel left funnel, slowly, slowly, and the shore remained still, but the fleets seemed to move out toward the eager *Johnson*. At the speed of nine knots an hour the scene

separated into its parts. On an easily rolling sea, under a crystal sky, black-hulled transports--erstwhile packets--lay waiting, while grey cruisers and gunboats lay near shore, shelling the beach and some woods. From their grey sides came thin red flashes, belches of white smoke, and then over the waters sounded boom--boom--boom-boom. The crew of the _Jefferson G. Johnson_ forgave Little Nell all the suffering of a previous fortnight.

To the westward, about the mouth of Santiago harbour, sat a row of castellated grey battleships, their eyes turned another way, waiting.

The _Johnson_ swung past a transport whose decks and rigging were aswarm with black figures, as if a tribe of bees had alighted upon a log. She swung past a cruiser indignant at being left out of the game, her deck thick with white-clothed tars watching the play of their luckier brethren. The cold blue, lifting seas tilted the big ships easily, slowly, and heaved the little ones in the usual sinful way, as if very little babes had surreptitiously mounted sixteen-hand trotting hunters. The _Johnson_ leered and tumbled her way through a community of ships. The bombardment ceased, and some of the troopships edged in near the land. Soon boats black with men and towed by launches were almost lost to view in the scintillant mystery of light which appeared where the sea met the land. A disembarkation had begun. The _Johnson_ sped on at her nine knots, and Little Nell chafed exceedingly, gloating upon the shore through his glasses, anon glancing irritably over the side to note the efforts of the excited tug. Then at last they were in a sort of a cove, with troopships, newspaper boats, and cruisers on all sides of them, and over the water came a great hum of human voices, punctuated frequently by the clang of engine-room gongs as the steamers manoeuvred to avoid jostling.

In reality it was the great moment--the moment for which men, ships, islands, and continents had been waiting for months; but somehow it did not look it. It was very calm; a certain strip of high, green, rocky shore was being rapidly populated from boat after boat; that was all. Like many preconceived moments, it refused to be supreme.

But nothing lessened Little Nell's frenzy. He knew that the army was landing--he could see it; and little did he care if the great moment did not look its part--it was his virtue as a correspondent to recognise the great moment in any disguise. The _Johnson_ lowered a boat for him, and he dropped into it swiftly, forgetting everything. However, the mate, a bearded philanthropist, flung after him a mackintosh and a bottle of whisky. Little Nell's face was turned toward those other boats filled with men, all eyes upon the placid, gentle, noiseless shore. Little Nell saw many soldiers seated stiffly beside upright rifle barrels, their blue breasts crossed with white shelter tent and blanket-rolls. Launches screeched; jack-tars pushed or pulled with their boathooks; a beach was alive with working soldiers, some of them stark naked. Little Nell's boat touched the shore amid a babble of tongues, dominated at that time by a single stern voice, which was repeating, "Fall in, B Company!"

He took his mackintosh and his bottle of whisky and invaded Cuba. It was a trifle bewildering. Companies of those same men in blue and brown were being rapidly formed and marched off across a little open

space--near a pool--near some palm trees--near a house--into the hills. At one side, a mulatto in dirty linen and an old straw hat was hospitably using a machete to cut open some green cocoanuts for a group of idle invaders. At the other side, up a bank, a blockhouse was burning furiously; while near it some railway sheds were smouldering, with a little Roger's engine standing amid the ruins, grey, almost white, with ashes until it resembled a ghost. Little Nell dodged the encrimsoned blockhouse, and proceeded where he saw a little village street lined with flimsy wooden cottages. Some ragged Cuban cavalymen were tranquilly tending their horses in a shed which had not yet grown cold of the Spanish occupation. Three American soldiers were trying to explain to a Cuban that they wished to buy drinks. A native rode by, clubbing his pony, as always. The sky was blue; the sea talked with a gravelly accent at the feet of some rocks; upon its bosom the ships sat quiet as gulls. There was no mention, directly, of invasion--invasion for war--save in the roar of the flames at the blockhouse; but none even heeded this conflagration, excepting to note that it threw out a great heat. It was warm, very warm. It was really hard for Little Nell to keep from thinking of his own affairs: his debts, other misfortunes, loves, prospects of happiness. Nobody was in a flurry; the Cubans were not tearfully grateful; the American troops were visibly glad of being released from those ill transports, and the men often asked, with interest, "Where's the Spaniards?" And yet it must have been a great moment! It was a great moment!

It seemed made to prove that the emphatic time of history is not the emphatic time of the common man, who throughout the change of nations feels an itch on his shin, a pain in his head, hunger, thirst, a lack of sleep; the influence of his memory of past firesides, glasses of beer, girls, theatres, ideals, religions, parents, faces, hurts, joy.

Little Nell was hailed from a comfortable veranda, and, looking up, saw Walkley of the Eclipse, stretched in a yellow and green hammock, smoking his pipe with an air of having always lived in that house, in that village. "Oh, dear little Nell, how glad I am to see your angel face again! There! don't try to hide it; I can see it. Did you bring a corkscrew too? You're superseded as master of the slaves. Did you know it? And by Rogers, too! Rogers is a Sadducee, a cadaver and a pelican, appointed to the post of chief correspondent, no doubt, because of his rare gift of incapacity. Never mind."

"Where is he now?" asked Little Nell, taking seat on the steps.

"He is down interfering with the landing of the troops," answered Walkley, swinging a leg. "I hope you have the Johnson well stocked with food as well as with cigars, cigarettes and tobaccos, ales, wines and liquors. We shall need them. There is already famine in the house of Walkley. I have discovered that the system of transportation for our gallant soldiery does not strike in me the admiration which I have often felt when viewing the management of an ordinary bun-shop. A hunger, stifling, jammed together amid odours, and everybody irritable--ye gods, how irritable! And so I--- Look! look!"

The Jefferson G. Johnson, well known to them at an incredible distance, could be seen striding the broad sea, the smoke belching from her funnel, headed for Jamaica. "The Army Lands in Cuba!" shrieked

Walkley. "Shafter's Army Lands near Santiago! Special type! Half the front page! Oh, the Sadducee! The cadaver! The pelican!"

Little Nell was dumb with astonishment and fear. Walkley, however, was at least not dumb. "That's the pelican! That's Mr. Rogers making his first impression upon the situation. He has engraved himself upon us. We are tattooed with him. There will be a fight to-morrow, sure, and we will cover it even as you found Cervera's fleet. No food, no horses, no money. I am transport lame; you are sea-weak. We will never see our salaries again. Whereby Rogers is a fool."

"Anybody else here?" asked Little Nell wearily.

"Only young Point." Point was an artist on the _Eclipse_. "But he has nothing. Pity there wasn't an almshouse in this God-forsaken country. Here comes Point now." A sad-faced man came along carrying much luggage. "Hello, Point! lithographer _and_ genius, have you food? Food. Well, then, you had better return yourself to Tampa by wire. You are no good here. Only one more little mouth to feed."

Point seated himself near Little Nell. "I haven't had anything to eat since daybreak," he said gloomily, "and I don't care much, for I am simply dog-tired."

"Don't tell _me_ you are dog-tired, my talented friend," cried Walkley from his hammock. "Think of me. And now what's to be done?"

They stared for a time disconsolately at where, over the rim of the sea, trailed black smoke from the _Johnson_. From the landing-place below and to the right came the howls of a man who was superintending the disembarkation of some mules. The burning blockhouse still rendered its hollow roar. Suddenly the men-crowded landing set up its cheer, and the steamers all whistled long and raucously. Tiny black figures were raising an American flag over a blockhouse on the top of a great hill.

"That's mighty fine Sunday stuff," said Little Nell. "Well, I'll go and get the order in which the regiments landed, and who was first ashore, and all that. Then I'll go and try to find General Lawton's headquarters. His division has got the advance, I think."

"And, lo! I will write a burning description of the raising of the flag," said Walkley. "While the brilliant Point buskies for food--and makes damn sure he gets it," he added fiercely.

Little Nell thereupon wandered over the face of the earth, threading out the story of the landing of the regiments. He only found about fifty men who had been the first American soldier to set foot on Cuba, and of these he took the most probable. The army was going forward in detail, as soon as the pieces were landed. There was a house something like a crude country tavern--the soldiers in it were looking over their rifles and talking. There was a well of water quite hot--more palm trees--an inscrutable background.

When he arrived again at Walkley's mansion he found the verandah crowded with correspondents in khaki, duck, dungaree and flannel. They wore riding-breeches, but that was mainly forethought. They could see

now that fate intended them to walk. Some were writing copy, while Walkley discoursed from his hammock. Rhodes--doomed to be shot in action some days later--was trying to borrow a canteen from men who had one, and from men who had none. Young Point, wan, utterly worn out, was asleep on the floor. Walkley pointed to him. "That is how he appears after his foraging journey, during which he ran all Cuba through a sieve. Oh, yes; a can of corn and a half-bottle of lime juice."

"Say, does anybody know, the name of the commander of the 26th Infantry?"

"Who commands the first brigade of Kent's Division?"

"What was the name of the chap that raised the flag?"

"What time is it?"

And a woeful man was wandering here and there with a cold pipe, saying plaintively, "Who's got a match? Anybody here got a match?"

Little Nell's left boot hurt him at the heel, and so he removed it, taking great care and whistling through his teeth. The heated dust was upon them all, making everybody feel that bathing was unknown and shattering their tempers. Young Point developed a snore which brought grim sarcasm from all quarters. Always below, hummed the traffic of the landing-place.

When night came Little Nell thought best not to go to bed until late, because he recognised the mackintosh as but a feeble comfort. The evening was a glory. A breeze came from the sea, fanning spurts of flame out of the ashes and charred remains of the sheds, while overhead lay a splendid summer-night sky, aflash with great tranquil stars. In the streets of the village were two or three fires, frequently and suddenly reddening with their glare the figures of low-voiced men who moved here and there. The lights of the transports blinked on the murmuring plain in front of the village; and far to the westward Little Nell could sometimes note a subtle indication of a playing search-light, which alone marked the presence of the invisible battleships, half-mooned about the entrance of Santiago Harbour, waiting--waiting--waiting.

When Little Nell returned to the veranda he stumbled along a man-strewn place, until he came to the spot where he left his mackintosh; but he found it gone. His curses mingled then with those of the men upon whose bodies he had trodden. Two English correspondents, lying awake to smoke a last pipe, reared and looked at him lazily. "What's wrong, old chap?" murmured one. "Eh? Lost it, eh? Well, look here; come here and take a bit of my blanket. It's a jolly big one. Oh, no trouble at all, man. There you are. Got enough? Comfy? Good-night."

A sleepy voice arose in the darkness. "If this hammock breaks, I shall hit at least ten of those Indians down there. Never mind. This is war."

The men slept. Once the sound of three or four shots rang across the windy night, and one head uprose swiftly from the verandah, two eyes looked dazedly at nothing, and the head as swiftly sank. Again a sleepy

voice was heard. "Usual thing! Nervous sentries!" The men slept. Before dawn a pulseless, penetrating chill came into the air, and the correspondents awakened, shivering, into a blue world. Some of the fires still smouldered. Walkley and Little Nell kicked vigorously into Point's framework. "Come on, brilliance! Wake up, talent! Don't be sodgering. It's too cold to sleep, but it's not too cold to hustle." Point sat up dolefully. Upon his face was a childish expression. "Where are we going to get breakfast?" he asked, sulking.

"There's no breakfast for you, you hound! Get up and hustle." Accordingly they hustled. With exceeding difficulty they learned that nothing emotional had happened during the night, save the killing of two Cubans who were so secure in ignorance that they could not understand the challenge of two American sentries. Then Walkley ran a gamut of commanding officers, and Little Nell pumped privates for their impressions of Cuba. When his indignation at the absence of breakfast allowed him, Point made sketches. At the full break of day the Adolphus, and Eclipse despatch boat, sent a boat ashore with Tailor and Shackles in it, and Walkley departed tearlessly for Jamaica, soon after he had bestowed upon his friends much tinned goods and blankets.

"Well, we've got our stuff off," said Little Nell. "Now Point and I must breakfast."

Shackles, for some reason, carried a great hunting-knife, and with it Little Nell opened a tin of beans.

"Fall to," he said amiably to Point.

There were some hard biscuits. Afterwards they--the four of them--marched off on the route of the troops. They were well loaded with luggage, particularly young Point, who had somehow made a great gathering of unnecessary things. Hills covered with verdure soon enclosed them. They heard that the army had advanced some nine miles with no fighting. Evidences of the rapid advance were here and there--coats, gauntlets, blanket rolls on the ground. Mule-trains came herding back along the narrow trail to the sound of a little tinkling bell. Cubans were appropriating the coats and blanket-rolls.

The four correspondents hurried onward. The surety of impending battle weighed upon them always, but there was a score of minor things more intimate. Little Nell's left heel had chafed until it must have been quite raw, and every moment he wished to take seat by the roadside and console himself from pain. Shackles and Point disliked each other extremely, and often they foolishly quarrelled over something, or nothing. The blanket-rolls and packages for the hand oppressed everybody. It was like being burned out of a boarding-house, and having to carry one's trunk eight miles to the nearest neighbour. Moreover, Point, since he had stupidly overloaded, with great wisdom placed various cameras and other trifles in the hands of his three less-burdened and more sensible friends. This made them fume and gnash, but in complete silence, since he was hideously youthful and innocent and unaware. They all wished to rebel, but none of them saw their way clear, because--they did not understand. But somehow it seemed a barbarous project--no one wanted to say anything--cursed him privately for a little ass, but--said nothing. For instance, Little Nell wished

to remark, "Point, you are not a thoroughbred in a half of a way. You are an inconsiderate, thoughtless little swine." But, in truth, he said, "Point, when you started out you looked like a Christmas-tree. If we keep on robbing you of your bundles there soon won't be anything left for the children." Point asked dubiously, "What do you mean?" Little Nell merely laughed with deceptive good-nature.

They were always very thirsty. There was always a howl for the half-bottle of lime juice. Five or six drops from it were simply heavenly in the warm water from the canteens. Point seemed to try to keep the lime juice in his possession, in order that he might get more benefit of it. Before the war was ended the others found themselves declaring vehemently that they loathed Point, and yet when men asked them the reason they grew quite inarticulate. The reasons seemed then so small, so childish, as the reasons of a lot of women. And yet at the time his offences loomed enormous.

The surety of impending battle still weighed upon them. Then it came that Shackles turned seriously ill. Suddenly he dropped his own and much of Point's traps upon the trail, wriggled out of his blanket-roll, flung it away, and took seat heavily at the roadside. They saw with surprise that his face was pale as death, and yet streaming with sweat.

"Boys," he said in his ordinary voice, "I'm clean played out. I can't go another step. You fellows go on, and leave me to come as soon as I am able."

"Oh, no, that wouldn't do at all," said Little Nell and Tailor together.

Point moved over to a soft place, and dropped amid whatever traps he was himself carrying.

"Don't know whether it's ancestral or merely from the--sun--but I've got a stroke," said Shackles, and gently slumped over to a prostrate position before either Little Nell or Tailor could reach him.

Thereafter Shackles was parental; it was Little Nell and Tailor who were really suffering from a stroke, either ancestral or from the sun.

"Put my blanket-roll under my head, Nell, me son," he said gently. "There now! That is very nice. It is delicious. Why, I'm all right, only--only tired." He closed his eyes, and something like an easy slumber came over him. Once he opened his eyes. "Don't trouble about me," he remarked.

But the two fussed about him, nervous, worried, discussing this plan and that plan. It was Point who first made a business-like statement. Seated carelessly and indifferently upon his soft place, he finally blurted out:

"Say! Look here! Some of us have got to go on. We can't all stay here. Some of us have got to go on."

It was quite true; the Eclipse could take no account of strokes. In the end Point and Tailor went on, leaving Little Nell to bring on

Shackles as soon as possible. The latter two spent many hours in the grass by the roadside. They made numerous abrupt acquaintances with passing staff officers, privates, muleteers, many stopping to inquire the wherefore of the death-faced figure on the ground. Favours were done often and often, by peer and peasant--small things, of no consequence, and yet warming.

It was dark when Shackles and Little Nell had come slowly to where they could hear the murmur of the army's bivouac.

"Shack," gasped Little Nell to the man leaning forlornly upon him, "I guess we'd better bunk down here where we stand."

"All right, old boy. Anything you say," replied Shackles, in the bass and hollow voice which arrives with such condition.

They crawled into some bushes, and distributed their belongings upon the ground. Little Nell spread out the blankets, and generally played housemaid. Then they lay down, supperless, being too weary to eat. The men slept.

At dawn Little Nell awakened and looked wildly for Shackles, whose empty blanket was pressed flat like a wet newspaper on the ground. But at nearly the same moment Shackles appeared, elate.

"Come on," he cried; "I've rustled an invitation for breakfast."

Little Nell came on with celerity.

"Where? Who?" he said.

"Oh! some officers," replied Shackles airily. If he had been ill the previous day, he showed it now only in some curious kind of deference he paid to Little Nell.

Shackles conducted his comrade, and soon they arrived at where a captain and his one subaltern arose courteously from where they were squatting near a fire of little sticks. They wore the wide white trouser-stripes of infantry officers, and upon the shoulders of their blue campaign shirts were the little marks of their rank; but otherwise there was little beyond their manners to render them different from the men who were busy with breakfast near them. The captain was old, grizzled--a common type of captain in the tiny American army--overjoyed at the active service, confident of his business, and yet breathing out in some way a note of pathos. The war was come too late. Age was grappling him, and honours were only for his widow and his children--merely a better life insurance policy. He had spent his life policing Indians with much labour, cold and heat, but with no glory for him nor his fellows. All he now could do was to die at the head of his men. If he had youthfully dreamed of a general's stars, they were now impossible to him, and he knew it. He was too old to leap so far; his sole honour was a new invitation to face death. And yet, with his ambitions lying half-strangled, he was going to take his men into any sort of holocaust, because his traditions were of gentlemen and soldiers, and because--he loved it for itself--the thing itself--the whirl, the unknown. If he had been degraded at that moment to be a

pot-wrestler, no power could have starved him from going through the campaign as a spectator. Why, the army! It was in each drop of his blood.

The lieutenant was very young. Perhaps he had been hurried out of West Point at the last moment, upon a shortage of officers appearing. To him, all was opportunity. He was, in fact, in great luck. Instead of going off in 1898 to grill for an indefinite period on some God-forgotten heap of red-hot sand in New Mexico, he was here in Cuba, on real business, with his regiment. When the big engagement came he was sure to emerge from it either horizontally or at the head of a company, and what more could a boy ask? He was a very modest lad, and talked nothing of his frame of mind, but an expression of blissful contentment was ever upon his face. He really accounted himself the most fortunate boy of his time; and he felt almost certain that he would do well. It was necessary to do well. He would do well.

And yet in many ways these two were alike; the grizzled captain with his gently mournful countenance--"Too late"--and the elate young second lieutenant, his commission hardly dry. Here again it was the influence of the army. After all they were both children of the army.

It is possible to spring into the future here and chronicle what happened later. The captain, after thirty-five years of waiting for his chance, took his Mauser bullet through the brain at the foot of San Juan Hill in the very beginning of the battle, and the boy arrived on the crest panting, sweating, but unscratched, and not sure whether he commanded one company or a whole battalion. Thus fate dealt to the hosts of Shackles and Little Nell.

The breakfast was of canned tomatoes stewed with hard bread, more hard bread, and coffee. It was very good fare, almost royal. Shackles and Little Nell were absurdly grateful as they felt the hot bitter coffee tingle in them. But they departed joyfully before the sun was fairly up, and passed into Siboney. They never saw the captain again.

The beach at Siboney was furious with traffic, even as had been the beach at Daqueri. Launches shouted, jack-tars prodded with their boathooks, and load of men followed load of men. Straight, parade-like, on the shore stood a trumpeter playing familiar calls to the troop-horses who swam towards him eagerly through the salt seas. Crowding closely into the cove were transports of all sizes and ages. To the left and to the right of the little landing-beach green hills shot upward like the wings in a theatre. They were scarred here and there with blockhouses and rifle-pits. Up one hill a regiment was crawling, seemingly inch by inch. Shackles and Little Nell walked among palms and scrubby bushes, near pools, over spaces of sand holding little monuments of biscuit-boxes, ammunition-boxes, and supplies of all kinds. Some regiment was just collecting itself from the ships, and the men made great patches of blue on the brown sand.

Shackles asked a question of a man accidentally: "Where's that regiment going to?" He pointed to the force that was crawling up the hill. The man grinned, and said, "They're going to look for a fight!"

"Looking for a fight!" said Shackles and Little Nell together. They

stared into each other's eyes. Then they set off for the foot of the hill. The hill was long and toilsome. Below them spread wider and wider a vista of ships quiet on a grey sea; a busy, black disembarkation-place; tall, still, green hills; a village of well separated cottages; palms; a bit of road; soldiers marching. They passed vacant Spanish trenches; little twelve-foot blockhouses. Soon they were on a fine upland near the sea. The path, under ordinary conditions, must have been a beautiful wooded way. It wound in the shade of thickets of fine trees, then through rank growths of bushes with revealed and fantastic roots, then through a grassy space which had all the beauty of a neglected orchard. But always from under their feet scuttled noisy land-crabs, demons to the nerves, which in some way possessed a semblance of moon-like faces upon their blue or red bodies, and these faces were turned with expressions of deepest horror upon Shackles and Little Nell as they sped to overtake the pugnacious regiment. The route was paved with coats, hats, tent and blanket rolls, ration-tins, haversacks--everything but ammunition belts, rifles and canteens.

They heard a dull noise of voices in front of them--men talking too loud for the etiquette of the forest--and presently they came upon two or three soldiers lying by the roadside, flame-faced, utterly spent from the hurried march in the heat. One man came limping back along the path. He looked to them anxiously for sympathy and comprehension. "Hurt m' knee. I swear I couldn't keep up with th' boys. I had to leave 'm. Wasn't that tough luck?" His collar rolled away from a red, muscular neck, and his bare forearms were better than stanchions. Yet he was almost babyishly tearful in his attempt to make the two correspondents feel that he had not turned back because he was afraid. They gave him scant courtesy, tinctured with one drop of sympathetic yet cynical understanding. Soon they overtook the hospital squad; men addressing chaste language to some pack-mules; a talkative sergeant; two amiable, cool-eyed young surgeons. Soon they were amid the rear troops of the dismounted volunteer cavalry regiment which was moving to attack. The men strode easily along, arguing one to another on ulterior matters. If they were going into battle, they either did not know it or they concealed it well. They were more like men going into a bar at one o'clock in the morning. Their laughter rang through the Cuban woods. And in the meantime, soft, mellow, sweet, sang the voice of the Cuban wood-dove, the Spanish guerilla calling to his mate--forest music; on the flanks, deep back on both flanks, the adorable wood-dove, singing only of love. Some of the advancing Americans said it was beautiful. It was beautiful. The Spanish guerilla calling to his mate. What could be more beautiful?

Shackles and Little Nell rushed precariously through waist-high bushes until they reached the centre of the single-filed regiment. The firing then broke out in front. All the woods set up a hot sputtering; the bullets sped along the path and across it from both sides. The thickets presented nothing but dense masses of light green foliage, out of which these swift steel things were born supernaturally.

It was a volunteer regiment going into its first action, against an enemy of unknown force, in a country where the vegetation was thicker than fur on a cat. There might have been a dreadful mess; but in military matters the only way to deal with a situation of this kind is to take it frankly by the throat and squeeze it to death. Shackles and

Little Nell felt the thrill of the orders. "Come ahead, men! Keep right ahead, men! Come on!" The volunteer cavalry regiment, with all the willingness in the world, went ahead into the angle of V-shaped Spanish formation.

It seemed that every leaf had turned into a soda-bottle and was popping its cork. Some of the explosions seemed to be against the men's very faces, others against the backs of their necks. "Now, men! Keep goin' ahead. Keep on goin'." The forward troops were already engaged. They, at least, had something at which to shoot. "Now, captain, if you're ready." "Stop that swearing there." "Got a match?" "Steady, now, men."

A gate appeared in a barbed-wire fence. Within were billowy fields of long grass, dotted with palms and luxuriant mango trees. It was Elysian--a place for lovers, fair as Eden in its radiance of sun, under its blue sky. One might have expected to see white-robed figures walking slowly in the shadows. A dead man, with a bloody face, lay twisted in a curious contortion at the waist. Someone was shot in the leg, his pins knocked cleanly from under him.

"Keep goin', men." The air roared, and the ground fled reelingly under their feet. Light, shadow, trees, grass. Bullets spat from every side. Once they were in a thicket, and the men, blanched and bewildered, turned one way, and then another, not knowing which way to turn. "Keep goin', men." Soon they were in the sunlight again. They could see the long scant line, which was being drained man by man--one might say drop by drop. The musketry rolled forth in great full measure from the magazine carbines. "Keep goin', men." "Christ, I'm shot!" "They're flankin' us, sir." "We're bein' fired into by our own crowd, sir." "Keep goin', men." A low ridge before them was a bottling establishment blowing up in detail. From the right--it seemed at that time to be the far right--they could hear steady, crashing volleys--the United States regulars in action.

Then suddenly--to use a phrase of the street--the whole bottom of the thing fell out. It was suddenly and mysteriously ended. The Spaniards had run away, and some of the regulars were chasing them. It was a victory.

When the wounded men dropped in the tall grass they quite disappeared, as if they had sunk in water. Little Nell and Shackles were walking along through the fields, disputing.

"Well, damn it, man!" cried Shackles, "we _must_ get a list of the killed and wounded."

"That is not nearly so important," quoth little Nell, academically, "as to get the first account to New York of the first action of the army in Cuba."

They came upon Taylor, lying with a bared torso and a small red hole through his left lung. He was calm, but evidently out of temper. "Good God, Taylor!" they cried, dropping to their knees like two pagans; "are you hurt, old boy?"

"Hurt?" he said gently. "No, 'tis not so deep as a well nor so wide as

a church-door, but 'tis enough, d'you see? You understand, do you? Idiots!"

Then he became very official. "Shackles, feel and see what's under my leg. It's a small stone, or a burr, or something. Don't be clumsy now! Be careful! Be careful!" Then he said, angrily, "Oh, you didn't find it at all. Damn it!"

In reality there was nothing there, and so Shackles could not have removed it. "Sorry, old boy," he said, meekly.

"Well, you may observe that I can't stay here more than a year," said Tailor, with some oratory, "and the hospital people have their own work in hand. It behoves you, Nell, to fly to Siboney, arrest a despatch boat, get a cot and some other things, and some minions to carry me. If I get once down to the base I'm all right, but if I stay here I'm dead. Meantime Shackles can stay here and try to look as if he liked it."

There was no disobeying the man. Lying there with a little red hole in his left lung, he dominated them through his helplessness, and through their fear that if they angered him he would move and--bleed.

"Well?" said Little Nell.

"Yes," said Shackles, nodding.

Little Nell departed.

"That blanket you lent me," Tailor called after him, "is back there somewhere with Point."

Little Nell noted that many of the men who were wandering among the wounded seemed so spent with the toil and excitement of their first action that they could hardly drag one leg after the other. He found himself suddenly in the same condition. His face, his neck, even his mouth, felt dry as sun-baked bricks, and his legs were foreign to him. But he swung desperately into his five-mile task. On the way he passed many things: bleeding men carried by comrades; others making their way grimly, with encrimsoned arms; then the little settlement of the hospital squad; men on the ground everywhere, many in the path; one young captain dying, with great gasps, his body pale blue, and glistening, like the inside of a rabbit's skin. But the voice of the Cuban wood-dove, soft, mellow, sweet, singing only of love, was no longer heard from the wealth of foliage.

Presently the hurrying correspondent met another regiment coming to assist--a line of a thousand men in single file through the jungle. "Well, how is it going, old man?" "How is it coming on?" "Are we doin' 'em?" Then, after an interval, came other regiments, moving out. He had to take to the bush to let these long lines pass him, and he was delayed, and had to flounder amid brambles. But at last, like a successful pilgrim, he arrived at the brow of the great hill overlooking Siboney. His practised eye scanned the fine broad brow of the sea with its clustering ships, but he saw thereon no _Eclipse_ despatch boats. He zigzagged heavily down the hill, and arrived finally amid the dust and outcries of the base. He seemed to ask a

thousand men if they had seen an _Eclipse_ boat on the water, or an _Eclipse_ correspondent on the shore. They all answered, "No."

He was like a poverty-stricken and unknown suppliant at a foreign Court. Even his plea got only ill-hearings. He had expected the news of the serious wounding of Tailor to appal the other correspondents, but they took it quite calmly. It was as if their sense of an impending great battle between two large armies had quite got them out of focus for these minor tragedies. Tailor was hurt--yes? They looked at Little Nell, dazed. How curious that Tailor should be almost the first--how _very_ curious--yes. But, as far as arousing them to any enthusiasm of active pity, it seemed impossible. He was lying up there in the grass, was he? Too bad, too bad, too bad!

Little Nell went alone and lay down in the sand with his back against a rock. Tailor was prostrate up there in the grass. Never mind. Nothing was to be done. The whole situation was too colossal. Then into his zone came Walkley the invincible.

"Walkley!" yelled Little Nell. Walkley came quickly, and Little Nell lay weakly against his rock and talked. In thirty seconds Walkley understood everything, had hurled a drink of whisky into Little Nell, had admonished him to lie quiet, and had gone to organise and manipulate. When he returned he was a trifle dubious and backward. Behind him was a singular squad of volunteers from the _Adolphus_, carrying among them a wire-woven bed.

"Look here, Nell!" said Walkley, in bashful accents; "I've collected a battalion here which is willing to go bring Tailor; but--they say--you--can't you show them where he is?"

"Yes," said Little Nell, arising.

* * * * *

When the party arrived at Siboney, and deposited Tailor in the best place, Walkley had found a house and stocked it with canned soups. Therein Shackles and Little Nell revelled for a time, and then rolled on the floor in their blankets. Little Nell tossed a great deal. "Oh, I'm so tired. Good God, I'm tired. I'm--tired."

In the morning a voice aroused them. It was a swollen, important, circus voice saying, "Where is Mr. Nell? I wish to see him immediately."

"Here I am, Rogers," cried Little Nell.

"Oh, Nell," said Rogers, "here's a despatch to me which I thought you had better read."

Little Nell took the despatch. It was: "Tell Nell can't understand his inaction; tell him come home first steamer from Port Antonio, Jamaica."

REGINALD'S PEACE POEM

by Saki
from *Reginald*
eBook #2830

"I'm writing a poem on Peace," said Reginald, emerging from a sweeping operation through a tin of mixed biscuits, in whose depths a macaroon or two might yet be lurking.

"Something of the kind seems to have been attempted already," said the Other.

"Oh, I know; but I may never have the chance again. Besides, I've got a new fountain pen. I don't pretend to have gone on any very original lines; in writing about Peace the thing is to say what everybody else is saying, only to say it better. It begins with the usual ornithological emotion--

'When the widgeon westward winging
Heard the folk Vereeniginging,
Heard the shouting and the singing'"--

"Vereeniginging is good, but why widgeon?"

"Why not? Anything that winged westward would naturally begin with a _w_."

"Need it wing westward?"

"The bird must go somewhere. You wouldn't have it hang around and look foolish. Then I've brought in something about the heedless hartebeest galloping over the deserted veldt."

"Of course you know it's practically extinct in those regions?"

"I can't help _that_, it gallops so nicely. I make it have all sorts of unexpected yearnings--

'Mother, may I go and maffick,
Tear around and hinder traffic?"

Of course you'll say there would be no traffic worth bothering about on the bare and sun-scorched veldt, but there's no other word that rhymes with maffick."

"Seraphic?"

Reginald considered. "It might do, but I've got a lot about angels later on. You must have angels in a Peace poem; I know dreadfully little about their habits."

"They can do unexpected things, like the hartebeest."

"Of course. Then I turn on London, the City of Dreadful Nocturnes, resonant with hymns of joy and thanksgiving--

'And the sleeper, eye unlidding,
Heard a voice for ever bidding
Much farewell to Dolly Gray;
Turning weary on his truckle-
Bed he heard the honey-suckle
Lauded in apiarian lay.'

Longfellow at his best wrote nothing like that."

"I agree with you."

"I wish you wouldn't. I've a sweet temper, but I can't stand being agreed with. And I'm so worried about the aasvogel."

Reginald stared dismally at the biscuit-tin, which now presented an unattractive array of rejected cracknels.

"I believe," he murmured, "if I could find a woman with an unsatisfied craving for cracknels, I should marry her."

"What is the tragedy of the aasvogel?" asked the Other sympathetically.

"Oh, simply that there's no rhyme for it. I thought about it all the time I was dressing--it's dreadfully bad for one to think whilst one's dressing--and all lunch-time, and I'm still hung up over it. I feel like those unfortunate automobilists who achieve an unenviable notoriety by coming to a hopeless stop with their cars in the most crowded thoroughfares. I'm afraid I shall have to drop the aasvogel, and it did give such lovely local colour to the thing."

"Still you've got the heedless hartebeest."

"And quite a decorative bit of moral admonition--when you've worried the meaning out--"

'Cease, War, thy bubbling madness that the wine shares,
And bid thy legions turn their swords to mine shares.'

Mine shares seems to fit the case better than ploughshares. There's lots more about the blessings of Peace, shall I go on reading it?"

"If I must make a choice, I think I would rather they went on with the war."

THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM

by Rabindranath Tagore

(A LETTER FROM NEW YORK TO THE AUTHOR'S OWN COUNTRYMEN)

from *Creative Unity*

PG EBook #23136

When freedom is not an inner idea which imparts strength to our activities and breadth to our creations, when it is merely a thing of external circumstance, it is like an open space to one who is blindfolded.

In my recent travels in the West I have felt that out there freedom as an idea has become feeble and ineffectual. Consequently a spirit of repression and coercion is fast spreading in the politics and social relationships of the people.

In the age of monarchy the king lived surrounded by a miasma of intrigue. At court there was an endless whispering of lies and calumny, and much plotting and planning among the conspiring courtiers to manipulate the king as the instrument of their own purposes.

In the present age intrigue plays a wider part, and affects the whole country. The people are drugged with the hashish of false hopes and urged to deeds of frightfulness by the goadings of manufactured panics; their higher feelings are exploited by devious channels of unctuous hypocrisy, their pockets picked under anæsthetics of flattery, their very psychology affected by a conspiracy of money and unscrupulous diplomacy.

In the old order the king was given to understand that he was the freest individual in the world. A greater semblance of external freedom, no doubt, he had than other individuals. But they built for him a gorgeous prison of unreality.

The same thing is happening now with the people of the West. They are flattered into believing that they are free, and they have the sovereign power in their hands. But this power is robbed by hosts of self-seekers, and the horse is captured and stabled because of his gift of freedom over space. The mob-mind is allowed the enjoyment of an apparent liberty, while its true freedom is curtailed on every side. Its thoughts are fashioned according to the plans of organised interest; in its choosing of ideas and forming of opinions it is hindered either by some punitive force or by the constant insinuation of untruths; it is made to dwell in an artificial world of hypnotic phrases. In fact, the people have become the storehouse of a power that attracts round it a swarm of adventurers who are secretly investing its walls to exploit it for their own devices.

Thus it has become more and more evident to me that the ideal of freedom has grown tenuous in the atmosphere of the West. The mentality is that of a slave-owning community, with a mutilated multitude of men tied to its commercial and political treadmill. It is the mentality of mutual distrust and fear. The appalling scenes of inhumanity and injustice, which are growing familiar to us, are the outcome of a psychology that deals with terror. No cruelty can be uglier in its

ferocity than the cruelty of the coward. The people who have sacrificed their souls to the passion of profit-making and the drunkenness of power are constantly pursued by phantoms of panic and suspicion, and therefore they are ruthless even where they are least afraid of mischances. They become morally incapable of allowing freedom to others, and in their eagerness to curry favour with the powerful they not only connive at the injustice done by their own partners in political gambling, but participate in it. A perpetual anxiety for the protection of their gains at any cost strikes at the love of freedom and justice, until at length they are ready to forgo liberty for themselves and for others.

My experience in the West, where I have realised the immense power of money and of organised propaganda,—working everywhere behind screens of camouflage, creating an atmosphere of distrust, timidity, and antipathy,—has impressed me deeply with the truth that real freedom is of the mind and spirit; it can never come to us from outside. He only has freedom who ideally loves freedom himself and is glad to extend it to others. He who cares to have slaves must chain himself to them; he who builds walls to create exclusion for others builds walls across his own freedom; he who distrusts freedom in others loses his moral right to it. Sooner or later he is lured into the meshes of physical and moral servility.

Therefore I would urge my own countrymen to ask themselves if the freedom to which they aspire is one of external conditions. Is it merely a transferable commodity? Have they acquired a true love of freedom? Have they faith in it? Are they ready to make space in their society for the minds of their children to grow up in the ideal of human dignity, unhindered by restrictions that are unjust and irrational?

Have we not made elaborately permanent the walls of our social compartments? We are tenaciously proud of their exclusiveness. We boast that, in this world, no other society but our own has come to finality in the classifying of its living members. Yet in our political agitations we conveniently forget that any unnaturalness in the relationship of governors and governed which humiliates us, becomes an outrage when it is artificially fixed under the threat of military persecution.

When India gave voice to immortal thoughts, in the time of fullest vigour of vitality, her children had the fearless spirit of the seekers of truth. The great epic of the soul of our people—the *Mahâbhârata*—gives us a wonderful vision of an overflowing life, full of the freedom of inquiry and experiment. When the age of the Buddha came, humanity was stirred in our country to its uttermost depth. The freedom of mind which it produced expressed itself in a wealth of creation, spreading everywhere in its richness over the continent of Asia. But with the ebb of life in India the spirit of creation died away. It hardened into an age of inert construction. The organic unity of a varied and elastic society gave way to a conventional order which proved its artificial character by its inexorable law of exclusion.

Life has its inequalities, I admit, but they are natural and are in harmony with our vital functions. The head keeps its place apart from the feet, not through some external arrangement or any conspiracy of coercion. If the body is compelled to turn somersaults for an indefinite period, the head never exchanges its relative function for that of the feet. But have our social divisions the same inevitableness of organic law? If we have the hardihood to say "yes" to that question, then how can we blame an alien people for subjecting us to a political order which they are tempted to believe eternal?

By squeezing human beings in the grip of an inelastic system and forcibly holding them fixed, we have ignored the laws of life and growth. We have forced living souls into a permanent passivity, making them incapable of moulding circumstance to their own intrinsic design, and of mastering their own destiny. Borrowing our ideal of life from a dark period of our degeneracy, we have covered up our sensitiveness of soul under the immovable weight of a remote past. We have set up an elaborate ceremonial of cage-worship, and plucked all the feathers from the wings of the living spirit of our people. And for us,—with our centuries of degradation and insult, with the amorphousness of our national unity, with our helplessness before the attack of disasters from without and our unreasoning self-obstructions from within,—the punishment has been terrible. Our stupefaction has become so absolute that we do not even realise that this persistent misfortune, dogging our steps for ages, cannot be a mere accident of history, removable only by another accident from outside.

Unless we have true faith in freedom, knowing it to be creative, manfully taking all its risks, not only do we lose the right to claim freedom in politics, but we also lack the power to maintain it with all our strength. For that would be like assigning the service of God to a confirmed atheist. And men, who contemptuously treat their own brothers and sisters as eternal babies, never to be trusted in the most trivial details of their personal life,—coercing them at every step by the cruel threat of persecution into following a blind lane leading to nowhere, driving a number of them into hypocrisy and into moral inertia,—will fail over and over again to rise to the height of their true and severe responsibility. They will be incapable of holding a just freedom in politics, and of fighting in freedom's cause.

The civilisation of the West has in it the spirit of the machine which must move; and to that blind movement human lives are offered as fuel, keeping up the steam-power. It represents the active aspect of inertia which has the appearance of freedom, but not its truth, and therefore gives rise to slavery both within its boundaries and outside. The present civilisation of India has the constraining power of the mould. It squeezes living man in the grip of rigid regulations, and its repression of individual freedom makes it only too easy for men to be forced into submission of all kinds and degrees. In both of these traditions life is offered up to something which is not life; it is a sacrifice, which has no God for its worship, and is therefore utterly in vain. The West is continually producing mechanical power in excess of its spiritual control, and India has produced a system of mechanical control in excess of its vitality.

THE LUCK OF THE BOGANS.

by Sarah Orne Jewett

from *Strangers and Wayfarers*

EBook #31857

I.

The old beggar women of Bantry streets had seldom showered their blessings upon a departing group of emigrants with such hearty good will as they did upon Mike Bogan and his little household one May morning.

Peggy Muldoon, she of the game leg and green-patched eye and limber tongue, steadied herself well back against the battered wall at the street corner and gave her whole energy to a torrent of speech unusual to even her noble powers. She would not let Mike Bogan go to America unsaluted and unblessed; she meant to do full honor to this second cousin, once removed, on the mother's side.

"Yirra, Mike Bogan, is it yerself thin, goyn away beyant the says?" she began with true dramatic fervor. "Let poor owld Peg take her last look on your laughing face me darlin'. She'll be under the ground this time next year, God give her grace, and you far away lavin' to strange spades the worruk of hapin' the sods of her grave. Give me one last look at me darlin' lad wid his swate Biddy an' the shild. Oh that I live to see this day!"

Peg's companions, old Marget Dunn and Biddy O'Hern and no-legged Tom Whinn, the fragment of a once active sailor who propelled himself by a low truckle cart and two short sticks; these interesting members of society heard the shrill note of their leader's eloquence and suddenly appeared like beetles out of unsuspected crevices near by. The side car, upon which Mike Bogan and his wife and child were riding from their little farm outside the town to the place of departure, was stopped at the side of the narrow street. A lank yellow-haired lad, with eyes red from weeping sat swinging his long legs from the car side, another car followed, heavily laden with Mike's sister's family, and a mourning yet envious group of acquaintances footed it in the rear. It was an excited, picturesque little procession; the town was quickly aware of its presence, and windows went up from house to house, and heads came out of the second and third stories and even in the top attics all along the street. The air was thick with blessings, the quiet of Bantry was permanently broken.

"Lard bliss us and save us!" cried Peggy, her shrill voice piercing the chatter and triumphantly lifting itself in audible relief above the din,--"Lard bliss us an' save us for the flower o' Bantry is lavin' us this day. Break my heart wid yer goyn will ye Micky Bogan and make it black night to the one eye that's left in me gray head this fine mornin' o' spring. I that hushed the mother of you and the father of you babies in me arms, and that was a wake old woman followin' and crapin' to see yerself christened. Oh may the saints be good to you Micky Bogan and Biddy Flaherty the wife, and forgive you the sin an' shame of turning yer proud backs on ould Ireland. Ain't

there pigs and praties enough for ye in poor Bantry town that her crabbedest childer must lave her. Oh wisha wisha, I'll see your face no more, may the luck o' the Bogans follow you, that failed none o' the Bogans yet. May the sun shine upon you and grow two heads of cabbage in the same sprout, may the little b'y live long and get him a good wife, and if she ain't good to him may she die from him. May every hair on both your heads turn into a blessed candle to light your ways to heaven, but not yit me darlin's--not yit!"

The jaunting car had been surrounded by this time and Mike and his wife were shaking hands and trying to respond impartially to the friendly farewells and blessings of their friends. There never had been such a leave-taking in Bantry. Peggy Muldoon felt that her eloquence was in danger of being ignored and made a final shrill appeal. "Who'll bury me now?" she screamed with a long wail which silenced the whole group; "who'll lay me in the grave, Micky bein' gone from me that always gave me the kind word and the pinny or trippence ivery market day, and the wife of him Bidy Flaherty the rose of Glengariff; many's the fine meal she's put before old Peggy Muldoon that is old and blind."

"Awh, give the ould sowl a pinny now," said a sympathetic voice, "'t will bring you luck, more power to you." And Mike Bogan, the tears streaming down his honest cheeks, plunged deep into his pocket and threw the old beggar a broad five-shilling piece. It was a monstrous fortune to Peggy. Her one eye glared with joy, the jaunting car moved away while she fell flat on the ground in apparent excess of emotion. The farewells were louder for a minute--then they were stopped; the excitable neighborhood returned to its business or idleness and the street was still. Peggy rose rubbing an elbow, and said with the air of a queen to her retinue, "Coom away now poor crathurs, so we'll drink long life to him." And Marget Dunn and Bidy O'Hern and no-legged Tom Whinn with his truckle cart disappeared into an alley.

"What's all this whillalu?" asked a sober-looking, clerical gentleman who came riding by.

"'T is the Bogans going to Ameriky, yer reverence," responded Jim Kalehan, the shoemaker, from his low window. "The folks gived them their wake whilst they were here to enjoy it and them was the keeners that was goin' hippety with lame legs and fine joy down the convanient alley for beer, God bless the poor souls!"

Mike Bogan and Bidy his wife looked behind them again and again. Mike blessed himself fervently as he caught a last glimpse of the old church on the hill where he was christened and married, where his father and his grandfather had been christened and married and buried. He remembered the day when he had first seen his wife, who was there from Glengariff to stay with her old aunt, and coming to early mass, had looked to him like a strange sweet flower abloom on the gray stone pavement where she knelt. The old church had long stood on the steep height at the head of Bantry street and watched and waited for her children. He would never again come in from his little farm in the early morning--he never again would be one of the Bantry men. The golden stories of life in America turned to paltry tinsel, and a love and pride of the old country, never forgotten by her sons and

daughters, burned with fierce flame on the inmost altar of his heart. It had all been very easy to dream fine dreams of wealth and landownership, but in that moment the least of the pink daisies that were just opening on the roadside was dearer to the simple-hearted emigrant than all the world beside.

"Lave me down for a bit of sod," he commanded the wondering young driver, who would have liked above all things to sail for the new world. The square of turf from the hedge foot, sparkling with dew and green with shamrock and gay with tiny flowers, was carefully wrapped in Mike's best Sunday handkerchief as they went their way. Biddy had covered her head with her shawl--it was she who had made the plan of going to America, it was she who was eager to join some successful members of her family who had always complained at home of their unjust rent and the difficulties of the crops. Everybody said that the times were going to be harder than ever that summer, and she was quick to catch at the inflammable speeches of some lawless townsfolk who were never satisfied with anything. As for Mike, the times always seemed alike, he did not grudge hard work and he never found fault with the good Irish weather. His nature was not resentful, he only laughed when Biddy assured him that the gorse would soon grow in the thatch of his head as it did on their cabin chimney. It was only when she said that, in America they could make a gentleman of baby Dan, that the father's blue eyes glistened and a look of determination came into his face.

"God grant we'll come back to it some day," said Mike softly. "I didn't know, faix indeed, how sorry I'd be for lavin' the owld place. Awh Biddy girl 't is many the weary day we'll think of the home we've left," and Biddy removed the shawl one instant from her face only to cover it again and burst into a new shower of tears. The next day but one they were sailing away out of Queenstown harbor to the high seas. Old Ireland was blurring its green and purple coasts moment by moment; Kinsale lay low, and they had lost sight of the white cabins on the hillsides and the pastures golden with furze. Hours before the old women on the wharves had turned away from them shaking their great cap borders. Hours before their own feet had trodden the soil of Ireland for the last time. Mike Bogan and Biddy had left home, they were well on their way to America. Luckily nobody had been with them at last to say good-by--they had taken a more or less active part in the piteous general leave-taking at Queenstown, but those were not the faces of their own mothers or brothers to which they looked back as the ship slid away through the green water.

"Well, sure, we're gone now," said Mike setting his face westward and tramping the steerage deck. "I like the say too, I belave, me own grandfather was a sailor, an' 't is a fine life for a man. Here's little Dan goin' to Ameriky and niver mistrustin'. We'll be sindin' the gossoon back again, rich and fine, to the owld place by and by, 'tis throe for us, Biddy."

But Biddy, like many another woman, had set great changes in motion and then longed to escape from their consequences. She was much discomposed by the ship's unsteadiness. She accused patient Mike of having dragged her away from home and friends. She grew very white in the face, and was helped to her hard steerage berth where she had

plenty of time for reflection upon the vicissitudes of seafaring. As for Mike, he grew more and more enthusiastic day by day over their prospects as he sat in the shelter of the bulkhead and tended little Dan and talked with his companions as they sailed westward.

Who of us have made enough kindly allowance for the homesick quick-witted ambitious Irish men and women, who have landed every year with such high hopes on our shores. There are some of a worse sort, of whom their native country might think itself well rid--but what thrifty New England housekeeper who takes into her home one of the pleasant-faced little captive maids, from Southern Ireland, has half understood the change of surroundings. That was a life in the open air under falling showers and warm sunshine, a life of wit and humor, of lavishness and lack of provision for more than the passing day--of constant companionship with one's neighbors, and a cheerful serenity and lack of nervous anticipation born of the vicinity of the Gulf Stream. The climate makes the characteristics of Cork and Kerry; the fierce energy of the Celtic race in America is forced and stimulated by our own keen air. The beauty of Ireland is little hinted at by an average orderly New England town--many a young girl and many a blundering sturdy fellow is heartsick with the homesickness and restraint of his first year in this golden country of hard work. To so many of them a house has been but a shelter for the night--a sleeping-place: if you remember that, you do not wonder at fumbling fingers or impatience with our houses full of trinkets. Our needless tangle of furnishing bewilders those who still think the flowers that grow of themselves in the Irish thatch more beautiful than anything under the cover of our prosaic shingled roofs.

"Faix, a fellow on deck was telling me a nate story the day," said Mike to Biddy Bogan, by way of kindly amusement. "Says he to me, 'Mike,' says he, 'did ye ever hear of wan Pathrick O'Brien that heard some bla'guard tell how in Ameriky you picked up money in the streets?' 'No,' says I. 'He wint ashore in a place,' says he, 'and he walked along and he come to a sign on a wall. Silver Street was on it. 'I 'ont stap here,' says he, 'it ain't wort my while at all, at all. I'll go on to Gold Street,' says he, but he walked ever since and he ain't got there yet."

Biddy opened her eyes and laughed feebly. Mike looked so bronzed and ruddy and above all so happy, that she took heart. "We're sound and young, thanks be to God, and we'll earn an honest living," said Mike, proudly. "'T is the childher I'm thinkin' of all the time, an' how they'll get a chance the best of us niver had at home. God bless old Bantry forever in spite of it. An' there's a smart rid-headed man that has every bother to me why 'ont I go with him and keep a tidy bar. He's been in the same business this four year gone since he come out, and twenty pince in his pocket when he landed, and this year he took a month off and went over to see the ould folks and build 'em a dacint house intirely, and hire a man to farm wid 'em now the old ones is old. He says will I put in my money wid him, an he'll give me a great start I wouldn't have in three years else."

"Did you have the fool's head on you then and let out to him what manes you had?" whispered Biddy, fiercely and lifting herself to look at him.

"I did then; 't was no harm," answered the unsuspecting Mike.

"'T was a black-hearted rascal won the truth from you!" and Biddy roused her waning forces and that very afternoon appeared on deck. The red-headed man knew that he had lost the day when he caught her first scornful glance.

"God pity the old folks of him an' their house," muttered the sharp-witted wife to Mike, as she looked at the low-lived scheming fellow whom she suspected of treachery.

"He said thim was old clothes he was wearin' on the sea," apologized Mike for his friend, looking down somewhat consciously at his own comfortable corduroys. He and Biddy had been well to do on their little farm, and on good terms with their landlord the old squire. Poor old gentleman, it had been a sorrow to him to let the young people go. He was a generous, kindly old man, but he suffered from the evil repute of some shortsighted neighbors. "If I gave up all I had in the world and went to the almshouse myself, they would still damn me for a landlord," he said, desperately one day. "But I never thought Mike Bogan would throw up his good chances. I suppose some worthless fellow called him stick-in-the-mud and off he must go."

There was some unhappiness at first for the young people in America. They went about the streets of their chosen town for a day or two, heavy-hearted with disappointment. Their old neighbors were not housed in palaces after all, as the letters home had suggested, and after a few evenings of visiting and giving of messages, and a few days of aimless straying about, Mike and Biddy hired two rooms at a large rent up three flights of stairs, and went to housekeeping. Little Dan rolled down one flight the first day; no more tumbling on the green turf among the daisies for him, poor baby boy. His father got work at the forge of a carriage shop, having served a few months with a smith at home, and so taking rank almost as a skilled laborer. He was a great favorite speedily, his pay was good, at least it would have been good if he had lived on the old place among the fields, but he and Biddy did not know how to make the most of it here, and Dan had a baby sister presently to keep him company, and then another and another, and there they lived up-stairs in the heat, in the cold, in daisy time and snow time, and Dan was put to school and came home with a knowledge of sums in arithmetic which set his father's eyes dancing with delight, but with a knowledge besides of foul language and a brutal way of treating his little sisters when nobody was looking on.

Mike Bogan was young and strong when he came to America, and his good red blood lasted well, but it was against his nature to work in a hot half-lighted shop, and in a very few years he began to look pale about the mouth and shaky in the shoulders, and then the enthusiastic promises of the red-headed man on the ship, borne out, we must allow, by Mike's own observation, inclined him and his hard earned capital to the purchase of a tidy looking drinking shop on a side street of the town. The owner had died and his widow wished to go West to live with her son. She knew the Bogans and was a respectable soul in her way. She and her husband had kept a quiet place, everybody acknowledged, and everybody was thankful that since drinking shops must be kept, so

decent a man as Mike Bogan was taking up the business.

II.

The luck of the Bogans proved to be holding true in this generation. Their proverbial good fortune seemed to come rather from an absence of bad fortune than any special distinction granted the generation or two before Mike's time. The good fellow sometimes reminded himself gratefully of Peggy Muldoon's blessing, and once sent her a pound to keep Christmas upon. If he had only known it, that unworthy woman bestowed curses enough upon him because he did not repeat it the next year, to cancel any favors that might have been anticipated. Good news flew back to Bantry of his prosperity, and his comfortable home above the store was a place of reception and generous assistance to all the westward straying children of Bantry. There was a bit of garden that belonged to the estate, the fences were trig and neat, and neither Mike nor Biddy were persons to let things look shabby while they had plenty of money to keep them clean and whole. It was Mike who walked behind the priest on Sundays when the collection was taken. It was Mike whom good Father Miles trusted more than any other member of his flock, whom he confided in and consulted, whom perhaps his reverence loved best of all the parish because they were both Bantry men, born and bred. And nobody but Father Miles and Biddy and Mike Bogan knew the full extent of the father's and mother's pride and hope in the cleverness and beauty of their only son. Nothing was too great, and no success seemed impossible when they tried to picture the glorious career of little Dan.

Mike was a kind father to his little daughters, but all his hope was for Dan. It was for Dan that he was pleased when people called him Mr. Bogan in respectful tones, and when he was given a minor place of trust at town elections, he thought with humble gladness that Dan would have less cause to be ashamed of him by and by when he took his own place as gentleman and scholar. For there was something different about Dan from the rest of them, plain Irish folk that they were. Dan was his father's idea of a young lord; he would have liked to show the boy to the old squire, and see his look of surprise. Money came in at the shop door in a steady stream, there was plenty of it put away in the bank and Dan must wear well-made clothes and look like the best fellows at the school. He was handsomer than any of them, he was the best and quickest scholar of his class. The president of the great carriage company had said that he was a very promising boy more than once, and had put his hand on Mike's shoulder as he spoke. Mike and Biddy, dressed in their best, went to the school examinations year after year and heard their son do better than the rest, and saw him noticed and admired. For Dan's sake no noisy men were allowed to stay about the shop. Dan himself was forbidden to linger there, and so far the boy had clear honest eyes, and an affectionate way with his father that almost broke that honest heart with joy. They talked together when they went to walk on Sundays, and there was a plan, increasingly interesting to both, of going to old Bantry some summer--just for a treat. Oh happy days! They must end as summer days do, in winter weather.

There was an outside stair to the two upper stories where the Bogans lived above their place of business, and late one evening, when the shop shutters were being clasped together below, Biddy Bogan heard a familiar heavy step and hastened to hold her brightest lamp in the doorway.

"God save you," said his reverence Father Miles, who was coming up slowly, and Biddy dropped a decent courtesy and devout blessing in return. His reverence looked pale and tired, and seated himself wearily in a chair by the window--while Biddy coasted round by a bedroom door to "whist" at two wakeful daughters who were teasing each other and chattering in bed.

"'T is long since we saw you here, sir," she said, respectfully. "'T is warm weather indade for you to be about the town, and folks sick an' dyin' and needing your help, sir. Mike'll be up now, your reverence. I hear him below."

Biddy had grown into a stout mother of a family, red-faced and bustling; there was little likeness left to the rose of Glengariff with whom Mike had fallen in love at early mass in Bantry church. But the change had been so gradual that Mike himself had never become conscious of any damaging difference. She took a fresh loaf of bread and cut some generous slices and put a piece of cheese and a knife on the table within reach of Father Miles's hand. "I suppose 'tis waste of time to give you more, so it is," she said to him. "Bread an' cheese and no better will you ate I suppose, sir," and she folded her arms across her breast and stood looking at him.

"How is the luck of the Bogans to-day?" asked the kind old man. "The head of the school I make no doubt?" and at this moment Mike came up the stairs and greeted his priest with reverent affection.

"You're looking faint, sir," he urged. "Biddy get a glass now, we're quite by ourselves sir--and I've something for sickness that's very soft and fine entirely."

"Well, well, this once then," answered Father Miles, doubtfully. "I've had a hard day."

He held the glass in his hand for a moment and then pushed it away from him on the table. "Indeed it's not wrong in itself," said the good priest looking up presently, as if he had made something clear to his mind. "The wrong is in ourselves to make beasts of ourselves with taking too much of it. I don't shame me with this glass of the best that you've poured for me. My own sin is in the coffee-pot. It wilds my head when I've got most use for it, and I'm sure of an aching pate--God forgive me for indulgence; but I must have it for my breakfast now, and then. Give me a bit of bread and cheese; yes, that's what I want Bridget," and he pushed the glass still farther away.

"I've been at a sorry place this night," he went on a moment later, "the smell of the stuff can't but remind me. 'T is a comfort to come here and find your house so clean and decent, and both of you looking me in the face. God save all poor sinners!" and Mike and his wife

murmured assent.

"I wish to God you were out of this business and every honest man with you," said the priest, suddenly dropping his fatherly, Bantry good fellowship and making his host conscious of the solemnity of the church altar. "'T is a decent shop you keep, Mike, my lad, I know. I know no harm of it, but there are weak souls that can't master themselves, and the drink drags them down. There's little use in doing away with the shops though. We've got to make young men strong enough to let drink alone. The drink will always be in the world. Here's your bright young son; what are they teaching him at his school, do ye know? Has his character grown, do ye think Mike Bogan, and is he going to be a man for good, and to help decent things get a start and bad things to keep their place? I don't care how he does his sums, so I don't, if he has no character, and they may fight about beer and fight about temperance and carry their Father Matthew flags flying high, so they may, and it's all no good, lessen we can raise the young folks up above the place where drink and shame can touch them. God grant us help," he whispered, dropping his head on his breast. "I'm getting to be an old man myself, and I've never known the temptation that's like a hounding devil to many men. I can let drink alone, God pity those who can't. Keep the young lads out from it Mike. You're a good fellow, you're careful, but poor human souls are weak, God knows!"

"'T is thrue for you indade sir!" responded Biddy. Her eyes were full of tears at Father Miles's tone and earnestness, but she could not have made clear to herself what he had said.

"Will I put a dhrap more of wather in it, your riverence?" she suggested, but the priest shook his head gently, and, taking a handful of parish papers out of his pocket, proceeded to hold conference with the master of the house. Biddy waited a while and at last ventured to clear away the good priest's frugal supper. She left the glass, but he went away without touching it, and in the very afterglow of his parting blessing she announced that she had the makings of a pain within, and took the cordial with apparent approval.

Mike did not make any comment; he was tired and it was late, and long past their bedtime.

Biddy was wide awake and talkative from her tonic, and soon pursued the subject of conversation.

"What set the father out wid talking I do' know?" she inquired a little ill-humoredly. "'T was thrue for him that we kape a dacint shop anyhow, an' how will it be in the way of poor Danny when it's finding the manes to put him where he is?"

"'T wa'n't that he mint at all," answered Mike from his pillow. "Didn't ye hear what he said?" after endeavoring fruitlessly to repeat it in his own words--"He's right, sure, about a b'y's getting thim books and having no character. He thinks well of Danny, and he knows no harm of him. Wisha! what 'll we do wid that b'y, Biddy, I do' know! 'Fadther,' says he to me today, 'why couldn't ye wait an' bring me into the wurruld on American soil,' says he 'and maybe I'd been

prisident,' says he, and 't was the thruth for him."

"I'd rather for him to be a priest meself," replied the mother.

"That's what Father Miles said himself the other day," announced Mike wide awake now. "'I wish he'd the makings of a good priest,' said he. 'There'll soon be need of good men and hard picking for 'em too,' said he, and he let a great sigh. 'T is money they want and place they want, most o' them bla'guard b'ys in the siminary. 'T is the old fashioned min like meself that think however will they get souls through this life and through heaven's gate at last, wid clane names and God-fearin', dacint names left after them.' Thim was his own words indade."

"Idication was his cry always," said Bridget, blessing herself in the dark. "'T was only last confission he took no note of me own sins while he redded himself in the face with why don't I kape Mary Ellen to the school, and myself not an hour in the day to rest my poor bones. 'I have to kape her in, to mind the shmall childer,' says I, an' 't was thrue for me, so it was." She gave a jerk under the blankets, which represented the courtesy of the occasion. She had a great respect and some awe for Father Miles, but she considered herself to have held her ground in that discussion.

"We'll do our best by them all, sure," answered Mike. "'T is tribbling me money I am ivery day," he added, gayly. "The lord-liftinant himsilf is no surer of a good bury-in' than you an' me. What if we made a priest of Dan intirely?" with a great outburst of proper pride. "A son of your own at the alther saying mass for you, Biddy Flaherty from Glengariff!"

"He's no mind for it, more's the grief," answered the mother, unexpectedly, shaking her head gloomily on the pillow, "but marruk me wuds now, he'll ride in his carriage when I'm under the sods, give me grace and you too Mike Bogan! Look at the airs of him and the toss of his head. 'Mother,' says he to me, 'I'm goin' to be a big man!' says he, 'whin I grow up. D' ye think anybody 'll take me fer an Irishman?'"

"Bad cess to the bla'guard fer that then!" said Mike. "It's spoilin' him you are. 'T is me own pride of heart to come from old Bantry, an' he lied to me yesterday gone, saying would I take him to see the old place. Wisha! he's got too much tongue, and he's spindin' me money for me."

But Biddy pretended to be falling asleep. This was not the first time that the honest pair had felt anxiety creeping into their pride about Dan. He frightened them sometimes; he was cleverer than they, and the mother had already stormed at the boy for his misdemeanors, in her garrulous fashion, but covered them from his father notwithstanding. She felt an assurance of the merely temporary damage of wild oats; she believed it was just as well for a boy to have his freedom and his fling. She even treated his known lies as if they were truth. An easy-going comfortable soul was Biddy, who with much shrewdness and only a trace of shrewishness got through this evil world as best she might.

The months flew by. Mike Bogan was a middle-aged man, and he and his wife looked somewhat elderly as they went to their pew in the broad aisle on Sunday morning. Danny usually came too, and the girls, but Dan looked contemptuous as he sat next his father and said his prayers perfunctorily. Sometimes he was not there at all, and Mike had a heavy heart under his stiff best coat. He was richer than any other member of Father Miles's parish, and he was known and respected everywhere as a good citizen. Even the most ardent believers in the temperance cause were known to say that little mischief would be done if all the rumsellers were such men as Mr. Bogan. He was generous and in his limited way public spirited. He did his duty to his neighbor as he saw it. Every one used liquor more or less, somebody must sell it, but a low groggery was as much a thing of shame to him as to any man. He never sold to boys, or to men who had had too much already. His shop was clean and wholesome, and in the evening when a dozen or more of his respectable acquaintances gathered after work for a social hour or two and a glass of whiskey to rest and cheer them after exposure, there was not a little good talk about affairs from their point of view, and plenty of honest fun. In their own houses very likely the rooms were close and hot, and the chairs hard and unrestful. The wife had taken her bit of recreation by daylight and visited her friends. This was their comfortable club-room, Mike Bogan's shop, and Mike himself the leader of the assembly. There was a sober-mindedness in the man; his companions were contented though he only looked on tolerantly at their fun, for the most part, without taking any active share himself.

One cool October evening the company was well gathered in, there was even a glow of wood fire in the stove, and two of the old men were sitting close beside it. Corny Sullivan had been a soldier in the British army for many years, he had been wounded at last at Sebastopol, and yet here he was, full of military lore and glory, and propped by a wooden leg. Corny was usually addressed as Timber-toes by his familiars; he was an irascible old fellow to deal with, but as clean as a whistle from long habit and even stately to look at in his arm-chair. He had a nephew with whom he made his home, who would give him an arm presently and get him home to bed. His mate was an old sailor much bent in the back by rheumatism, Jerry Bogan; who, though no relation, was tenderly treated by Mike, being old and poor. His score was never kept, but he seldom wanted for his evening grog. Jerry Bogan was a cheerful soul; the wit of the Celts and their pathetic wilfulness were delightful in him. The priest liked him, the doctor half loved him, this old-fashioned Irishman who had a graceful compliment or a thrust of wit for whoever came in his way. What a treasury of old Irish lore and legend was this old sailor! What broadness and good cheer and charity had been fostered in his sailor heart! The delight of little children with his clever tales and mysterious performances with bits of soft pine and a sharp jackknife, a very Baron Munchausen of adventure, and here he sat, round backed and head pushed forward like an old turtle, by the fire. The other men sat or stood about the low-walled room. Mike was serving his friends; there was a clink of glass and a stirring and shaking, a pungent odor of tobacco, and much laughter.

"Soombody, whoiver it was, thrun a cat down in Tom Auley's well las'

night," announced Corny Sullivan with more than usual gravity.

"They'll have no luck thin," says Jerry. "Anybody that meddles wid wather 'ill have no luck while they live, faix they 'ont thin."

"Tom Auley's been up watchin' this three nights now," confides the other old gossip. "Thim dirty b'y's troublin' his pigs in the sthy, and having every stramash about the place, all for revinge upon him for gettin' the police afther thim when they sthole his hins. 'T was as well for him too, they're dirty bligards, the whole box and dice of them."

"Whishper now!" and Jerry pokes his great head closer to his friend. "The divil of 'em all is young Dan Bogan, Mike's son. Sorra a bit o' good is all his schoolin', and Mike's heart 'll be soon broke from him. I see him goin' about wid his nose in the air. He's a pritty boy, but the divil is in him an' 't is he ought to have been a praste wid his chances and Father Miles himself tarkin and tarkin wid him tryin' to make him a crown of pride to his people after all they did for him. There was niver a spade in his hand to touch the ground yet. Look at his poor father now! Look at Mike, that's grown old and gray since winther time." And they turned their eyes to the bar to refresh their memories with the sight of the disappointed face behind it.

There was a rattling at the door-latch just then and loud voices outside, and as the old men looked, young Dan Bogan came stumbling into the shop. Behind him were two low fellows, the worst in the town, they had all been drinking more than was good for them, and for the first time Mike Bogan saw his only son's boyish face reddened and stupid with whiskey. It had been an unbroken law that Dan should keep out of the shop with his comrades; now he strode forward with an absurd travesty of manliness, and demanded liquor for himself and his friends at his father's hands.

Mike staggered, his eyes glared with anger. His fatherly pride made him long to uphold the poor boy before so many witnesses. He reached for a glass, then he pushed it away--and with quick step reached Dan's side, caught him by the collar, and held him. One or two of the spectators chuckled with weak excitement, but the rest pitied Mike Bogan as he would have pitied them.

The angry father pointed his son's companions to the door, and after a moment's hesitation they went skulking out, and father and son disappeared up the stairway. Dan was a coward, he was glad to be thrust into his own bedroom upstairs, his head was dizzy, and he muttered only a feeble oath. Several of Mike Bogan's customers had kindly disappeared when he returned trying to look the same as ever, but one after another the great tears rolled down his cheeks. He never had faced despair till now; he turned his back to the men, and fumbled aimlessly among the bottles on the shelf. Some one came, in unconscious of the pitiful scene, and impatiently repeated his order to the shopkeeper.

"God help me, boys, I can't sell more this night!" he said brokenly. "Go home now and lave me to myself."

They were glad to go, though it cut the evening short. Jerry Bogan bundled his way last with his two canes. "Sind the b'y to say," he advised in a gruff whisper. "Sind him out wid a good captain now, Mike,'t will make a man of him yet."

A man of him yet! alas, alas--for the hopes that had been growing so many years. Alas for the pride of a simple heart, alas for the day Mike Bogan came away from sunshiny old Bantry with his baby son in his arms for the sake of making that son a gentleman.

III.

Winter had fairly set in, but the snow had not come, and the street was bleak and cold. The wind was stinging men's faces and piercing the wooden houses. A hard night for sailors coming on the coast--a bitter night for poor people everywhere.

From one house and another the lights went out in the street where the Bogans lived; at last there was no other lamp than theirs, in a window that lighted the outer stairs. Sometimes a woman's shadow passed across the curtain and waited there, drawing it away from the panes a moment as if to listen the better for a footstep that did not come. Poor Biddy had waited many a night before this. Her husband was far from well, the doctor said that his heart was not working right, and that he must be very careful, but the truth was that Mike's heart was almost broken by grief. Dan was going the downhill road, he had been drinking harder and harder, and spending a great deal of money. He had smashed more than one carriage and lamed more than one horse from the livery stables, and he had kept the lowest company in vilest dens. Now he threatened to go to New York, and it had come at last to being the only possible joy that he should come home at any time of night rather than disappear no one knew where. He had laughed in Father Miles's face when the good old man, after pleading with him, had tried to threaten him.

Biddy was in an agony of suspense as the night wore on. She dozed a little only to wake with a start, and listen for some welcome sound out in the cold night. Was her boy freezing to death somewhere? Other mothers only scolded if their sons were wild, but this was killing her and Mike, they had set their hopes so high. Mike was groaning dreadfully in his sleep to-night--the fire was burning low, and she did not dare to stir it. She took her worn rosary again and tried to tell its beads. "Mother of Pity, pray for us!" she said, wearily dropping the beads in her lap.

There was a sound in the street at last, but it was not of one man's stumbling feet, but of many. She was stiff with cold, she had slept long, and it was almost day. She rushed with strange apprehension to the doorway and stood with the flaring lamp in her hand at the top of the stairs. The voices were suddenly hushed. "Go for Father Miles!" said somebody in a hoarse voice, and she heard the words. They were carrying a burden, they brought it tip to the mother who waited. In their arms lay her son stone dead; he had been stabbed in a fight, he had struck a man down who had sprung back at him like a tiger. Dan,

little Dan, was dead, the luck of the Bogans, the end was here, and a wail that pierced the night, and chilled the hearts that heard it, was the first message of sorrow to the poor father in his uneasy sleep.

The group of men stood by--some of them had been drinking, but they were all awed and shocked. You would have believed every one of them to be on the side of law and order. Mike Bogan knew that the worst had happened. Biddy had rushed to him and fallen across the bed; for one minute her aggravating shrieks had stopped; he began to dress himself, but he was shaking too much; he stepped out to the kitchen and faced the frightened crowd.

"Is my son dead, then?" asked Mike Bogan of Bantry, with a piteous quiver of the lip, and nobody spoke. There was something glistening and awful about his pleasant Irish face. He tottered where he stood, he caught at a chair to steady himself. "The luck o' the Bogans is it?" and he smiled strangely, then a fierce hardness came across his face and changed it utterly. "Come down, come down!" he shouted, and snatching the key of the shop went down the stairs himself with great sure-footed leaps. What was in Mike? was he crazy with grief? They stood out of his way and saw him fling out bottle after bottle and shatter them against the wall. They saw him roll one cask after another to the doorway, and out into the street in the gray light of morning, and break through the staves with a heavy axe. Nobody dared to restrain his fury--there was a devil in him, they were afraid of the man in his blinded rage. The odor of whiskey and gin filled the cold air--some of them would have stolen the wasted liquor if they could, but no man there dared to move or speak, and it was not until the tall figure of Father Miles came along the street, and the patient eyes that seemed always to keep vigil, and the calm voice with its flavor of Bantry brogue, came to Mike Bogan's help, that he let himself be taken out of the wrecked shop and away from the spilt liquors to the shelter of his home.

A week later he was only a shadow of his sturdy self, he was lying on his bed dreaming of Bantry Bay and the road to Glengariff--the hedge roses were in bloom, and he was trudging along the road to see Biddy. He was working on the old farm at home and could not put the seed potatoes in their trench, for little Dan kept falling in and getting in his way. "Dan's not going to be plagued with the bad craps," he muttered to Father Miles who sat beside the bed. "Dan will be a fine squire in Ameriky," but the priest only stroked his hand as it twitched and lifted on the coverlet. What was Biddy doing, crying and putting the candles about him? Then Mike's poor brain grew steady.

"Oh, my God, if we were back in Bantry! I saw the gorse bloomin' in the t'atch d' ye know. Oh wisha wisha the poor ould home an' the green praties that day we come from it--with our luck smilin' us in the face."

"Whist darlin': kape aisy darlin'!" mourned Biddy, with a great sob. Father Miles sat straight and stem in his chair by the pillow--he had said the prayers for the dying, and the holy oil was already shining on Mike Bogan's forehead. The keeners were swaying themselves to and fro, there where they waited in the next room.

YOUTH AND AGE

by Samuel Taylor Coleridge
from *The Hundred Best English Poems*
Editor: Adam L. Gowans
PG eBook #17768

Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee--
Both were mine! Life went a maying
 With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
 When I was young!

When I was young?--Ah, woful when!
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands,
How lightly then it flashed along!--
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide!
Nought cared this body for wind or weather
When Youth and I liv'd in't together.
Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
O! the joys, that came down shower-like,
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
 Ere I was old.

Ere I was old? Ah woful Ere,
Which tells me, Youth's no longer here!
O Youth! for years so many and sweet
'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
I'll think it but a fond conceit--
It cannot be, that Thou art gone!
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd!--
And thou wert aye a masker bold!
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To make believe, that Thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size:
But springtide blossoms on thy lips,
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but thought: so think I will
That Youth and I are house-mates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve!
Where no hope is, life's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve,
 When we are old:

That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave,
Like some poor nigh-related guest,
That may not rudely be dismiss.
Yet hath outstay'd his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

__1869 Edition.__

THE DESTROYER

By William Merriam Rouse

from *Astounding Stories of Super-Science*, November, 1930

PG EBook #29919

The pencil in the hand of Allen Parker refused to obey his will. A strange unseen force pushed his will aside and took possession of the pencil point so that what he drew was not his own. It was the same when he turned from drawing board to typewriter. The sentences were not of his framing; the ideas were utterly foreign to him. This was the first hint he received of the fate that was drawing in like night upon him and his beautiful wife.

Parker, a young writer of growing reputation who illustrated his own work, was making a series of pencil sketches for a romance partly finished. The story was as joyous and elusive as sunlight, and until to-day his sketches had held the same quality. Now he could not tap the reservoir from which he had taken the wind-blown hair and smiling eyes of Madelon, his heroine.

When he drew or wrote he seemed to be submerged in the dark waters of a measureless evil pit. The face that mocked him from the paper was stamped with a world-old knowledge of forbidden things.

Parker dropped his pencil and leaned back, tortured. He and his wife, Betty, had taken this house in Pine Hills, a small and extremely quiet suburban village, solely for the purpose of concentration on the book which was to be the most important work he had done. He went to the door of the room that he used for a studio and called:

"Betty! Can you come here a moment, please?"

* * * * *

There was a patter of running feet on the stairs and then a girl of twenty, or thereabout, came into the room. Any man would have said she was a blessing. Her hair "was yellow like ripe corn," and her vivid blue eyes held depth and character and charm.

"Look!" exclaimed Parker. "What do you think of this stuff?"

For a moment there was silence. Then Allen Parker saw something he had never before seen in his wife's face for him or his work--a look of complete disgust.

"I wouldn't have believed you capable of doing anything so ... so horrid!" she said coldly. "How could you?"

"I don't know!" His arms, which had been ready to take her to him for comfort, dropped. "The work has been ... difficult, lately. As though something were pulling at my mind. But not like this! It isn't _me_!"

"It must be you, since it came out of you!" She turned away and moved

restlessly to one of the windows.

"Through me!" muttered Parker. "Ideas _come_!"

"You'll have to do something!"

"But what? I don't know what to do!"

"Why not go to see that new doctor?" asked Betty, over her shoulder.
"Dr. Friedrich von Stein?"

"Von Stein?" repeated Parker, vaguely. "Don't know him. Anyhow, I don't need a doctor. What in the world made you think of that?"

* * * * *

"Nothing, except that I can see his house from here. He's taken what they call 'the old Reynolds place.' You know--opposite the church. We looked at it and thought it was too large for us. He's made a lot of alterations."

"Oh, yes!" Parker had placed the newcomer, more recent than himself. "I had an idea that he was a doctor of philosophy, not medicine."

"He has half a dozen degrees, they say. Certainly he's a stunning looking man. I saw him on the street."

"Maybe he doesn't practice." The artist was gazing, baffled and sick at heart, upon what he had wrought. "And what could he do, unless it's my liver?"

"He might be a psycho-analyst, or something like that," she replied, slowly.

"But why the wild interest in this particular doctor?" Parker roused himself and looked at her. He felt irritable, and was ashamed of it.

"Only for your work," said Betty. A faint pink touched her cheeks.

Allen Parker had a sudden feeling of certainty that his wife was lying to him. To one who knew the Parkers it would have been equally impossible to think of Betty as lying, or of her husband as believing such a thing. Parker was outraged by his own suspicion. He sprang up and began to pace the floor.

"All right, then!" he exploded. "My work is going to the dogs! Why, there's an appointment with Cartwright to-morrow to show him these sketches, and the last few chapters I've done! We'll go now! If this man can't do anything for me I'll try somebody else!"

* * * * *

In ten minutes they were walking up the quiet street toward the present home of Dr. Friedrich von Stein. Despite his self-absorption Parker could not help noticing that his wife had never looked more attractive than she did at this moment. Her color had deepened, little

wisps of hair curled against her cheeks, and there was a sparkle in her eyes which he knew came only on very particular occasions.

Even from the outside it was apparent that many strange things had been done to the staid and dignified house of Reynolds. A mass of aerials hung above the roof. Some new windows had been cut at the second floor and filled with glass of a peculiar reddish-purple tinge. A residence had been turned into a laboratory, in sharp contrast to the charming houses up and down the street and the church of gray stone that stood opposite.

Beside the door, at the main entrance, a modest plate bore the legend: "Dr. Friedrich von Stein." Parker pressed the bell. Then he squared his broad shoulders and waited: a very miserable, very likeable young man, with a finely shaped head and a good set of muscles under his well cut clothes. He had brought his sketches, but he was uncomfortable with the portfolio under his arm. It seemed to contaminate him.

* * * * *

The door opened to reveal a blocky figure of a man in a workman's blouse and overalls. The fellow was pale of eye, towheaded; he appeared to be good natured but of little intelligence. The only remarkable thing about him was a livid welt that ran across one cheek, from nose to ear. Beside him a glossy-coated dachshund wagged furiously, after having barked once as a matter of duty.

"May we see Dr. von Stein?" asked Parker. "If he is in?"

"I will ask the Herr Doktor if he iss in," replied the man, stiffly.

"_Dummkopf!_" roared a voice from inside the house. An instant later man and dog shrank back along the hall and there appeared in their place one of the most striking personalities Allen Parker had ever seen.

Dr. Friedrich von Stein was inches more than six feet tall and he stood perfectly erect, with the unmistakable carriage of a well drilled soldier. He was big boned, but lean, and every movement was made with military precision. More than any other feature his eyes impressed Parker: they were steady, penetrating, and absolutely black. But for a thread of gray here and there his well-kept beard and hair were black. He might have been any age from forty to sixty, so deceptive was his appearance.

"Come in, if you please," he said, before Parker could speak. Von Stein's voice was rich and deep, but with a metallic quality which somehow corresponded with his mechanical smile. Except for the guttural r's there was hardly a hint of the foreigner in his speech. "It is Mr. and Mrs. Parker, I believe? I am Dr. von Stein."

* * * * *

He stood aside for them to pass into the hallway, and while they murmured their thanks he shot a volley of German at the man, whom he

called Heinrich. The frightened servant vanished; and the Parkers were taken into a living room furnished carelessly, but in good enough taste. Betty took her place on a couch, to which the doctor led her with a bow. Parker sank into an overstuffed chair not far from a window.

"I learned your names because of the beauty of madame," said Von Stein, as he stood looming above the mantel. Again he bowed. "One could not see her without wishing to know how such a charming woman was called. You are my neighbors from down the street, I believe."

"Yes," replied Allen. He wanted to be agreeable, but found it difficult. "And I think Mrs. Parker has developed a great admiration for you. She persuaded me to come here to-day. Are you, by chance, a psycho-analyst? I don't even know that you are a doctor of medicine, but--"

"I know a very great deal about the human mind," interrupted Dr. von Stein calmly. "I know a great deal about many things. I am not going to practice medicine here in Pine Hills because I have research work to do, but I will help you if I can. What is your trouble?"

* * * * *

The question brought back to Parker the mood of half an hour ago. Almost savagely he snapped the portfolio open and spread out a few of his recent drawings, with some of the earlier ones for comparison.

"Look!" he cried. "These vicious things are what I am doing now! I can't help myself! The pencil does not obey me! Apparently I have no emotional control. It's as though my normal ideas were shouldered aside, like people in a crowd. And my writing to-day was as bad as these illustrations. I'm doing a book. Consider these things carefully, Doctor. They are not obscene, except by inference. They can't be censored. The book would go through the mails. Yet they are deadly! Look at my heroine in these two pictures. In one she is like--like violets! In the other she looks capable of any crime! What is she? A vampire, if there is such a thing? A witch? I can almost believe in demonology since I made these last drawings!"

Parker, in spite of his excitement, tried to read the face of Dr. Friedrich von Stein. He found nothing but the automatic smile upon that mask. Yet it seemed to the artist that this time there was a hint of real pleasure in the curve of the lips. Was it possible that anyone could like those drawings? Parker began to think that he was going insane.

"This is most unfortunate for you," rumbled the doctor. "I understand. But I trust that the condition can be remedied, if it persists. You, Mr. Parker, and you, Madame, do you understand something of physics, of psychology, of metaphysics?"

"I fear that I'm rather ignorant," answered Betty. "Certainly I am in comparison with a man of your attainments."

* * * * *

Dr. von Stein bowed. He turned his black eyes upon Parker.

"And you, sir? I must adjust my explanation to--what shall I say? To your knowledge of the higher reaches of scientific thought?"

"Why, I majored in philosophy in college," said Parker, hesitatingly. "But that's quite a time ago, Herr Doktor. Of course I've tried to keep up with the conclusions of science. But a writer or a painter doesn't have any too much opportunity. He has his own problems to concern him."

"Yes, indeed!" Dr. von Stein was thoughtful. "So, and especially for the benefit of madame, I shall speak in terms of the concrete."

"Please consider me stupid!" begged Betty. "But I want to understand!"

"Certainly, except that you are not stupid, Madame. I will proceed. Both of you, I assume, know something of the radio? Very good! You know that an etheric wave transmits the message, and that it is received and amplified so that it is within the range of the human ear. These waves were there when paleolithic man hunted his meat with a stone-tipped club. To use them it was necessary to invent the microphone, and a receiving instrument.

"What I have said you already know. But here is what may startle you. Human thought is an etheric wave of the same essential nature as the radio wave. They are both electrical currents external to man. Thoughts sweep across the human mind as sound currents sweep across the aerials of a radio--"

"I told you!" Allen Parker turned a triumphant face to his wife. "Pardon me, Herr Doktor! I have tried to convince Mrs. Parker that my idea came from outside!"

* * * * *

"Exactly!" Dr. von Stein took no offense. "And a difference between the mind and the radio set is that with the radio you tune in upon whatever you choose, and when you choose. The mind is not under such control, although it should be. It receives that to which it happens to be open. Or that thought which has been intensified and strengthened by having been received and entertained by other minds. In India they say: 'Five thousand died of the plague and fifty thousand died of fear.' Do you both follow me?"

It was unnecessary to ask. Betty sat on the edge of the couch, intent upon every word. Parker, although more restrained, was equally interested. Moreover he was delighted to have what he had felt instinctively confirmed, in a way, by a man of science.

"Herbert Spencer said," continued the doctor, "that no thought, no feeling, is ever manifested save as the result of a physical force. This principle will before long be a scientific commonplace. And Huxley predicted that we would arrive at a mechanical equivalent of consciousness. But I will not attempt to bolster my position with

authorities. I know, and I can prove what I know.

"You, Mr. Parker, have been receiving some particularly annoying thoughts which have been intensified, it may be, by others, or another. Human will power can alter the rate of vibration of the line of force, or etheric wave. So-called good thoughts have a high rate of vibration, and those which are called bad ordinarily have a low rate. Have you, perhaps, an enemy?"

"Not that I know of," replied Parker, in a low voice.

"Then it would follow that this is accidental."

* * * * *

"Good heavens! Do you mean to say that someone could do this to me maliciously?"

"So far my experiments leave something to be desired," said Dr. von Stein, without answering directly. "No doubt you are peculiarly susceptible to thoughts which bear in any way on your work."

"But isn't there any help for it?" asked Betty. She was regarding her husband with the eyes of a stranger.

"I believe I can do something for Mr. Parker."

There was a knock at the door. The doctor boomed an order to come in. Heinrich, with the dachshund at his heels, entered bearing a tray with a bottle of wine and some slices of heavy fruit cake. He drew out a table and placed the tray.

"Do not bring that dog in when I have guests," said Von Stein. He spoke with a gleam of white teeth. "You know what will happen, Heinrich?"

"_Ja_, Herr Doktor! I take Hans out!" The man was terrified. He gathered the dog into his arms and fairly fled from the room. Dr. von Stein turned with a smile.

"I have to discipline him," he explained. "He's a stupid fellow, but faithful. I can't have ordinary servants about. There are scientific men who would be willing to bribe them for a look at my laboratory."

"I did not know such things were done among scholars," said Betty, slowly.

"What I have accomplished means power, Madame!" exclaimed the doctor. "There are jackals in every walk of life. If an unscrupulous man of science got into my laboratory, a physicist for instance, he might ... find out things!"

* * * * *

Dr. von Stein turned to his duties as host. He filled their glasses, and watched with satisfaction Betty's obvious enjoyment of the cake. A

box of mellow Havanas appeared from a cabinet: imported cigarettes from a smoking stand. But Parker, in spite of a liking for good wine and tobacco, was far too much concerned about his work to forget the errand that had brought him there.

"So you think," he said, when there was opportunity, "that you can help me, Dr. von Stein?"

"I can," replied von Stein, firmly; "but before attempting anything I'd like to wait a day or two. The attacking thoughts may become less violent, or your resistance greater, in either of which cases the condition will fade out. You will either get better or much worse. If you are worse come to see me again, and I promise you that I will do something!"

"I'll come, and thank you!" Parker felt better, and more cheerful than he had since the beginning of the disturbance. "Few things could make me suffer so much as trouble with my work."

"That is what I thought," agreed Dr. von Stein.

* * * * *

Betty rose. Her husband caught the look in her eyes as they met the bright, black gaze of Dr. von Stein, and he went cold. That look had always been for him alone. Her feet seemed to linger on the way to the door.

"He's wonderful!" she breathed, as they started down the uneventful street. "Scientific things never interested me before. But he makes them vital, living!"

"And yet," said Parker, thoughtfully, "there's something uncanny about that man!"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Betty. "It's because he's a genius! Don't be small, Allen!"

Parker gasped, and remained silent. He could not remember that his wife had ever spoken to him in quite that way. They finished the little journey home without speaking again and Parker went directly to studio. He sat down, with drooping shoulders, and considered the mess he had made of his book. Well, there was nothing to do but see Cartwright to-morrow and face the music!

Dinner that night was a mournful affair. The soft footsteps of the servant going in and out of the dining room, the ticking of the clock, were almost the only sounds. Betty was deep in her own thoughts; Parker was too miserable to talk. He went to bed early and lay staring into the darkness for what seemed like an eternity of slow moving hours.

The tall, deep voiced clock in the hall downstairs had just struck one when suddenly Parker's room was flooded with light. He sat up, blinking, and saw Betty standing near his bed. Her fingers twisted against each other; her face was drawn and white.

"Allen!" she whispered. "I'm afraid!"

Instantly he was on his feet; his arms went around her and the yellow head dropped wearily against his shoulder.

"Afraid of what?" he cried. "What is it, sweetheart?"

"I don't know!" All at once her body stiffened and she pulled away from him. Then she laughed--"What nonsense! I must have been having a bad dream ... it's nothing. Sorry I bothered you, Allen!"

She was gone before he could stop her. Bewildered, he did not know whether to follow. Better not, he thought. She would sleep now, and perhaps he would. But he was worried. Betty was becoming less and less like herself.

* * * * *

At last Parker did sleep, to awake shortly after daylight. He got a hasty breakfast and took an early train to New York. When John Cartwright, a shrewd and kindly man well advanced in years, arrived at his office Allen Parker was right there waiting for him.

Cartwright had shown a real affection for the younger man, a paternal interest. He beamed, as usual, until he sat down with the new drawings. Slowly the smile faded from his face. He went over them twice, three times, and then he looked up.

"My boy," he said, "did you do these?"

"Yes."

"Do you know that you are turning a delicate and beautiful romance into a lascivious libel on the human race?"

"It is being done," replied Parker, in a low voice. "And I--I can't help myself!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that when I start to draw Madelon my hand produces that woman of Babylon! The writing is just as bad. It's full of sneering hints, double meanings ... I shall destroy the stuff. I've been to see a psycho-analyst."

"Ah!" thoughtfully. "Perhaps you're tired, Allen. Why not take Betty for a sea trip? There'll still be time for fall publication."

"I'm going to try everything possible. I'd rather be dead than do work like this!"

* * * * *

When Parker left his friend he was somewhat encouraged. After the first shock Cartwright had been inclined to make light of the

difficulty, and by the time Allen Parker reached Pine Hills his stride had the usual swing and snap.

He ran up the steps of his house and burst into the living room with a smile. Betty was sitting by one of the windows, her hands lying relaxed in her lap. She turned a somber face toward her husband, and spoke before he had time to say a word of greeting.

"You knew that Cordelia Lyman died a short time ago, didn't you?"

"What's that?" exclaimed Parker, bewildered. "Lyman? Oh, the old lady down the street who left her money to found a home for aged spinsters? What about it?"

"But she didn't leave her money to found a home for aged spinsters, Allen. She had said she was going to, and everybody thought so. Her will was admitted to probate, or whatever they call it, yesterday. She left half a million, all she had, to Dr. Friedrich von Stein, to be used as he thinks best for the advancement of science!"

"Good heavens!" Parker stared. "Why, I didn't know she knew him. He'd only been here a week or so when she died."

"There isn't a flaw in the will, they say. You can imagine that Pine Hills is talking!"

"Well," said Parker philosophically, "he's lucky. I hope he does something with it."

"He will," replied Betty, with conviction. "He'll do a great many things!"

* * * * *

Parker told her of his interview with Cartwright, but she seemed little interested. He did not try to work that day but, after he had put the offending drawings and manuscript out of sight, he wandered, read, smoked, and in the evening persuaded Betty to take a moonlight walk with him.

They passed the house of Dr. von Stein, from which came a faint humming that sounded like a dynamo. Across the street the church was alight for some service. Triumphant music drifted to them. The moon hung above the spire, with its cross outlined darkly against the brilliant sky. The windows were great jewels. Betty drew a deep breath.

"Sometimes, Allen," she said, "I feel like praying!"

"You _are_ a beautiful prayer," whispered Parker.

She walked close to him, holding his arm, and repeated softly:

"Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?"

But that was the end of that mood. By the time they arrived home Betty was again the strange, aloof, cold, slightly hard woman of the past few days. Again depression settled upon Allen Parker.

* * * *

The next morning he breakfasted alone and went directly to the studio, without seeing Betty. Sun streamed into the room; the pencil moved swiftly. For a brief time Parker thought that he was himself again, as Madelon grew upon the block of paper. But the end was terrible. The last few strokes made her grotesque. This time the woman he had drawn was not merely evil; she was a mocking parody of his heroine. He threw drawing and pencil across the room.

But no real artist can be discouraged short of death. He went to work again and labored until luncheon time. The results were no better, although they varied. Now it seemed that some malevolent power was playing with him, torturing him to the accompaniment of devilish laughter. He was haggard and actually stooped of body when he bathed his face and went down to the dining room. From across the table Betty regarded him curiously.

"Fleming Proctor shot himself last night," she announced, calmly. "This morning they found him dead in his office."

"Proctor? You don't mean the president of the Pine Hills National Bank?"

"Yes." The expression of Betty's face did not change. "There was a note saying that he was sorry. It seems he'd made a large loan without security to an unknown person, and the bank examiner was coming to-day. Proctor said he couldn't help what he did. The note was confused as though he were trying to tell something and couldn't. They think his mind must have given way, particularly as they can't trace the loan, although the money is undoubtedly gone."

* * * *

"That kind of thing doesn't happen!" Parker was stunned. He had known Fleming Proctor, and liked him. They met often at the country club. "Proctor was honest, and a fine business man!"

"It did happen, Allen!"

"I'd like to know more about it. That would have been a case for Dr. von Stein to take in hand."

"Perhaps," said Betty, in a voice like ice. "But I'm more interested in finding out how soon you are going to return to normal. Frankly, I'm beginning to get bored."

Without a word Parker rose and left the room. Never before had his wife hurt him like this. Doubly sensitive just now, he was suffering alone in the studio when the telephone rang.

"Dr. von Stein speaking. Are you better, Mr. Parker?"

"Worse! Much worse!"

"Then come to my house this evening at nine. May I expect you? And alone?"

"Yes." There was much Parker wanted to say, but he choked the words back. "I'll be there, and alone."

"I shall be ready for you. Good-by."

Allen Parker hung up the receiver. He did not leave the studio again until evening.

* * * * *

As Parker approached the house of Dr. Friedrich von Stein he saw that the church was lighted as it had been the night before. In a clear sky the moon rode above the spire. He paused to let his glance sweep up along the beautiful line that ran from earth to the slender cross. That was how he felt. He wanted to rise, as that line rose, from cumbering earth to clarity and beauty.

He mounted the steps and rang. Dr. von Stein met him, with eyes and teeth agleam in the hall light. Wearily Parker stepped inside. His mood of the moment before was fading.

"Go upstairs to my laboratory, if you please," said the doctor. "It is best that I see you there, for it may be that you will need treatment."

"I need something," replied Parker as he went up a long flight of stairs. "I'm in a bad way."

Without answer von Stein led him down a short corridor and held open a door. Allen Parker stepped into a room that bewildered him with its strange contrasts.

At a glance he saw that nearly the whole upper floor of the building had been converted into one gigantic room. Near a big stone fireplace, where burning driftwood sent up its many tinted flames, Heinrich stood rigidly at attention. Hans, the dachshund, crouched at his feet. When the dog started to meet Parker a guttural command stopped him.

Here there were bearskins on the floor, huge stuffed chairs, footrests, little tables, humidors, pipe racks, all that one could desire for comfort. Two German duelling swords were crossed above the mantel.

* * * * *

But beyond this corner everything was different. Parker saw the massed windows of reddish-purple glass; he saw apparatus for which he had no name, as well as some of the ordinary paraphernalia of the chemical laboratory. There was wiring everywhere, and a multitude of lighting fixtures. Utilitarian tables, desks and chairs were placed about with

mathematical precision. There were plates and strips of metal set into the glass smooth flooring, which was broken by depressions and elevations of unusual form.

The most striking thing in the room was a huge copper bowl that hung inverted from the ceiling. In it, and extending down below the rim, was what seemed to be a thick and stationary mist. It looked as though the bowl had been filled with a silver gray mist and then turned bottom side up. But the cloud did not fall or float away.

"I can think and speak best from my desk," Von Stein was saying. "Please sit down facing me in the chair which Heinrich will place for you. Then we will talk."

Heinrich rolled one of the overstuffed chairs noiselessly to a position about six feet from the desk. Parker noticed a long metal strip in the floor between him and the doctor.

Just then Hans wriggled forward and the artist scratched his ears, to be rewarded by a grateful tongue. Again a command from Heinrich brought the dog to heel, but the voice was not so gruff this time. Together they returned to the fireplace.

Von Stein let his hands rest upon the desk top--a surface covered with levers, electric switches, push buttons, and contrivances the nature of which Parker could not guess. The doctor leaned forward. He threw over a switch. The lights in the room became less bright. He pressed a button. The Danse Macabre of Saint-Saens floated weirdly upon the air, as though the music came from afar off.

"Is that part of the treatment?" asked Parker, with a faint smile. "It's not cheering, exactly."

"Merely an idiosyncrasy of mine," answered Von Stein, showing his teeth. "Before anything is done I must, in order to aid the receptivity of your mind, go a little further with the explanation of certain things which I mentioned the other day. I promise not to bore you. More than that, Mr. Parker, I promise that you will be more interested than you have ever been in anything!"

* * * * *

It seemed to Parker that there was something sinister in the manner and speech of Dr. von Stein. The Dance of Death! Did that music have a meaning? Impossible! It was only his own sick mind that was allowing such thoughts to come to him.

"Anything that will help," he murmured.

"You have noticed that copper bowl?" Von Stein did not wait for a reply. "The misty appearance inside and underneath it is given by thousands upon thousands of minute platinum wires. When it is in use a slight electrical current is passed through it, varying in power according to the rate of vibration needed. That instrument, my dear sir, is a transmitter of thought. I may call it the microphone of the mind. I can tune in on any mind in the world, by experimenting up and

down the vibration range to determine the susceptibility of the particular person. The human mind does not need an amplifier, as the radio receiving set does. Rather, it acts as its own amplifier, once having received the thought. I invented one, however, to prove that it could be done. I equipped Heinrich with it and in half an hour by suggestion reduced him to his present state of docile stupidity. I have, Mr. Parker, the means of moving people to do my bidding!"

* * * * *

Von Stein stopped abruptly, as though for emphasis and to allow his astounding statements to take effect. Parker sat stunned, struggling to grasp all the implications of what he had just heard. Suddenly they became clear. He saw events in order, and in relation to each other.

"So that's how it was with Cordelia Lyman!" he cried hoarsely, leaning forward. "And it was you who had that money from Fleming Proctor!"

"You are not unintelligent," remarked Dr. von Stein. "Better that science should have the Lyman money than a few old women of no particular use. As for Proctor, he was a fool. I would have protected him."

"And my pictures ... my book...."

"I can cure you, Mr. Parker. _If I will!_"

"And anyone is at the mercy of this man!" groaned Parker.

"Not absolutely, I'm sorry to say," said the doctor. "The action of thought on the human consciousness is exactly like that of sound on the tuning fork. When the mind is tuned right, we'll say for illustration, the lower vibrations are not picked out of the ether. But as few minds are tuned right, and as all vary from time to time, I'm practically omnipotent."

"You have changed the nature of my wife!" Parker was getting hold of himself and he could speak with a degree of calmness. "That is a worse crime than the one you've committed against me directly!"

"Mr. Parker," said the doctor, impressively, "you are in a web. I am the spider. You are the fly. I don't particularly desire to hurt you, but I want your wife. This is the crux of the matter. She is the woman to share my triumphs. Already I have aroused her interest. Give her up and you will continue your work as before. Refuse, and you will lose her just as certainly as though you give her to me. For, my dear sir, you will be insane in less than a month from now. I promise you that!"

* * * * *

Allen Parker was not one to indulge in melodrama. For a long moment he sat looking into the black eyes of Von Stein. Then he spoke carefully.

"If my wife of her own will loved you, and wanted freedom, I'd let her go. But this is a kind of hypnosis. It's diabolical!"

"Who but the devil was the father of magic?" asked the doctor, cheerfully. "Hypnosis is unconsciously based on a scientific principle which I have mastered. Repeated advertising of a tooth brush or a box of crackers is mild mental suggestion--hypnosis, if you will. My dear fellow, be sensible!"

"Sophistry!" growled Parker.

Von Stein laughed. He moved a lever upon a dial and a sheet of blue flame quivered between them. With another movement of the lever it vanished.

"I could destroy you instantly," he said, "and completely, and no one could prove a crime! I shall not do it. I have no time to be bothered with investigations. Think of the fate I have promised you. Think, and you will give her up!"

"I shall not!" Parker wiped cold drops from his forehead. The doctor frowned thoughtfully.

"I'll intensify her desire to come here to-night," he said. "She herself will persuade you."

* * * * *

Parker set his fingers into the arms of his chair as Von Stein rose and walked to the copper bowl. He stood directly under it, and put on goggles with shields fitting close to his feet. At the pressure of his foot a tablelike affair rose from the floor in front of him. This, like the desk, was equipped with numerous dials, buttons and levers. Von Stein manipulated them. The great cap of copper descended until his head was enveloped by the mist of platinum wires. A faint humming grew in the room. A tiny bell tinkled.

"The connection is made," murmured Von Stein. He lifted a hand for silence: then his fingers leaped among the gadgets on the table. After that came a brief period, measured by seconds, of immobility. Then the table sank from view, the copper bowl lifted, and Dr. von Stein went back to his chair.

"She will be here shortly," he said. "If that does not change your mind...."

He shrugged. Parker knew what that shrug meant. He searched his mind for a plan and found none. Better die fighting than yield, or risk the vengeance of Friedrich von Stein. If he could get the doctor away from the desk where he controlled the blue-white flame there might be a chance to do something. Von Stein was by far the larger man, but Parker had been an athlete all his life. If....

"That mass of copper and platinum," he said, tentatively, "will make you master of the world!"

"My brain, my intelligence, has made me master of the world!" corrected Von Stein, proudly. He was touched in the right spot now.

"You have not seen all!"

* * * * *

He sprang up and went to one of the tables. From his pocket he took a piece of paper and crumpled it into a ball while, with the other hand, he made some electrical connections to a plate of metal set into the surface of the table. Next he placed the wad of paper on the plate. Then, standing at arm's length from the apparatus, he pressed a button. Instantly the paper disappeared behind a screen of the colors of the spectrum, from red to violet. The banded colors were there for a minute fraction of a second. Then there was nothing where the paper had been on the plate. Von Stein smiled as he stepped away from the table.

"The electron is formed by the crossing of two lines of force," he said, "and the interaction of positive and negative polarity. The electron is a stress in the ether, nothing more, but it is the stuff of which all matter is made. Thought is vibration in one dimension; matter in two. You have just seen me untie the knot, dissociate the electrons, or what you will. In plain language I have caused matter to vanish utterly. That paper is not burned up. It no longer exists in any form. The earth upon which we stand, Parker, can be dissolved like mist before the sun!"

Appalled as he was at this man who boasted and made good his terrible boasts Allen Parker had not forgotten the purpose that was in him. Now was his chance, while Von Stein stood smiling triumphantly between table and desk.

Parker shot from his chair with the speed of utter desperation. He fainted, and drove a vicious uppercut to the jaw of Dr. Friedrich von Stein. The doctor reeled but he did not go down. His fists swung. Parker found him no boxer, and beat a tattoo upon his middle. Von Stein began to slump.

Then two thick muscled arms closed around the artist from behind and he was lifted clear of the floor. He kicked, and tried to turn, but it was useless. The doctor recovered himself. His eyes blazed fury.

"Put him in the chair, Heinrich!" he roared. "For this I will show you what I can do, Herr Parker!"

* * * * *

At that instant little Hans, who had been yelping on the edge of the battle, dashed in. He leaped for the throat of Von Stein. The doctor kicked him brutally.

The shriek of agony from Hans loosened the arms of Heinrich. Parker got his footing again. He saw the clumsy serving man spring forward and gather his dog up to his breast. Again Parker rushed for his enemy.

It was clear now that Von Stein was cut off from the controls he wanted, and without Heinrich he could not master Parker in a fight.

For an instant he stood baffled. Then he retreated the length of the room, taking what blows he could not beat off. He staggered upon a plate of metal set into the floor, righted himself, and failed in an attempt to catch hold of Parker. Suddenly he bowed in the direction of the distant doorway.

Allen half turned. Betty was coming down the room, staring and breathless.

"_Leben sie wohl!_" cried Von Stein. "Farewell, Madame! I should like to take you with me!"

A great flash of the colors of the spectrum sent Parker reeling back. Dr. Friedrich von Stein had gone the way of the crumpled ball of paper.

There was a long moment of silence. Then Allen Parker found his wife in his arms, clinging to him.

"Are not two prayers a perfect strength?" she murmured, sobbing against his heart.

A HUNDRED MILES UNDERGROUND

by Anonymous

Ibid

Scientists bidding their families good-by in the morning to drop fifty or a hundred miles underground in high speed elevators, there to undertake researches not possible nearer to the earth's surface, may be realities of the next decade or two if some wealthy individual or institution accepts the recommendation of Dr. Harlow Shapley, distinguished astronomer of Harvard, in a talk recently before the American Geographical Society.

The earth's interior, Dr. Shapley said, is the "third dimension" of geography. Exploration of the planet's surface soon must cease from lack of places to explore. Even the upper air is coming to be reasonably well known scientifically, thanks to instruments sent up with balloons and to the radio and other investigators who have been uncovering secrets of upper-air electricity. But the interior of the earth is still one of the great mysteries. It is a paradox of astronomy that much more is known about the center of the sun or a star like Sirius than about the center of the earth.

Deep shafts of bore holes into the earth have been suggested often as sources of heat for human use. It is doubtful, however, whether such heat supplies could be obtained. For one thing, the supposed internal heat of the earth is still nothing but a guess. It may be that the relatively slight increases of heat found as one goes deeper in existing mines are due to radioactivity in the rocks instead of to outward seepage from the internal fires. Another difficulty about utilizing earth heat is that heat moves so slowly through substances like rock, as any housewife can prove by trying to fry an egg on a brick placed over a gas flame. As soon as the rock heat immediately at the bottom of a bore hole had been exhausted heat supply would stop until more could diffuse in from the sides.

Dr. Shapley's suggestion, in any event, is not to search for heat but for facts. Even in existing, relatively shallow mines, he believes, scientific laboratories at different depths under the surface might yield valuable data not now obtainable. Most scientific men will agree. Revolutionary as the idea may seem to those familiar only with the standardized laboratories of physics or chemistry, there are sound reasons why a half-dozen or so of the sciences should do precisely what Dr. Shapley suggests.

At least one underground laboratory has already been installed, for Prof. E. B. Babcock of the University of California has such a workroom in the Twin Peaks Tunnel, underneath the mountain that rises above the city of San Francisco. Natural radioactivity in the rocks thereabouts is greater than normal and Prof. Babcock finds that this apparently increases new species among fruit flies.

To dig out laboratory rooms a mile or so down in existing deep mines probably would cost far less than many enterprises already financed by philanthropists. Even to deepen these shafts for several miles would be much less difficult than most people imagine.

Increasing heat, if it is found that heat does increase, would not be difficult to overcome had the engineers sufficient money. Ventilation and transportation to and from the surface, while too costly for the business enterprise of winning metals from very deep mines, probably would present no serious difficulty were facts the chief object instead of profit. The only question to be decided before intending benefactors of science are urged to consider some such project is whether or not the facts likely to be won promise enough value to mankind.

An excellent case can be made out for answering yes. Dr. Shapley mentioned four chief lines of investigation suitable for such deep-mine laboratories: studies of gravity and of the variable length of the day, researches on the various kinds of earthquake waves, experiments on ether drift and tests of the biological effects of cosmic rays and of the rays from radium.

Astronomical theories indicate that the day ought to be growing slightly longer as the earth's rotation decreases a trifle from century to century because of friction from the tides. The actual length of the days seems, however, sometimes to be decreasing a tiny fraction of a second from year to year, as theory says that it should; sometimes to be increasing in a way for which no present theory provides. Observations underneath the earth, with a portion of the planet's crust and gravity overhead, might yield important clues to the cause of this mysterious wrong time kept by the terrestrial clock.

CATHERINE'S CAREER

by Harriet Jean Crawford

from *A Book of Bryn Mawr Stories*

Editors: Margaretta Morris and Louise Buffam Congdon

Project Gutenberg's EBook #43482

"Now, Jack, please don't be sentimental. You know how I hate it. Besides you have interrupted me just when I was convincing you that education will solve the race problem, and that is annoying." Poor Jack! Catherine little imagined what courage that interruption had taken. Nor did she realize how unheeding he had been as she rolled forth her arguments. (She had just been reading an article in *The North American Review*.)

"But, you know, I have been wanting to speak for..."

"I thought you knew better, too," Catherine continued a little sorrowfully, "a person of my ambitious aspirations" (Catherine lived for ambitious aspirations), "isn't going to be happy settling down into a general entertainer and housekeeper for mankind, always sweet and pretty and dainty, standing every evening on the little porch all tumbling over with honeysuckle, dressed in white with a red rose tucked in my belt (that's your ideal, isn't it?) and a hand stretched forth in undulating curves to welcome you. This way." Catherine stood up, balanced herself and nearly fell down. "No, I can't even do it. And then I'm not 'sweet and lovely.' I hate 'sweet and lovely' girls. Why, every girl who hasn't any looks, or any brains, or anything else, is considered 'sweet and lovely.'"

"I never said you were 'sweet and lovely.'"

"Oh! then you consider me horrid and disagreeable, do you? Well, that's flattering. No, I can't marry you. Such a catastrophe has never once entered my head." Catherine grew pensive. "I can't imagine anything more frightful than playing the piano, arranging flowers, and being charming, to eternity." Jack had jumped up from his seat by the piano and stalked over to the window where he stood biting his lips and beating the floor with one foot, gazing out into the black night with an impatiently reflective air. When Catherine finished, he spoke half to himself and half to the night.

"Just what Charlie Dickenson warned me would happen. 'See here, old chap,' he said, 'if you don't want to be the laughing stock of the whole club you'd better steer clear of Catherine Neville. Those college girls are chock full of notions. I suppose she does like you in a way, because you listen to her theories. But it is a ticklish business. Remember poor Harry Cockran, the trouble he had!' ... I thought she liked me. But I see now that one can't expect anything sensible from them." Catherine did not appear to listen. She was playing a series of changing chords on the piano. But the chords grew louder and louder and gradually passed into the minor key, until at the last word she spun round on the stool.

"Sensible?" she exclaimed. "That depends upon the point of view. I think we are extremely sensible. For we can be reached only through our minds, not through our emotions. Any girl can fall in love. But few have the

strength of mind to see that they are needed for loftier careers. We have ideals, aims, purposes."

"Exactly. You long to be strong-minded, to take to platforms, stand up for poor oppressed womankind, and generally make a lot of trouble. Why all the men say that nothing would induce them to marry college girls. They think it's ruination of a nice, pretty, sensible girl to send her to college, and let her head get filled with all sorts of ideas. I tell you it ruins them with the men. But I had rather hoped you were an exception, or at least above the average."

"You men are too exasperating. You inherit from your grandfathers poor, foolish, worn-out ideas that stick in your stubborn, narrow-minded little brains. No amount of eloquence on my part could convince you of anything else. I might talk myself blue in the face, and there you would sit, placid and serene in the error of your judgment. Nothing could change you, except, perhaps, a change of grandfathers. I suppose you consider it woman's place to bask in your radiance. Well, I sha'n't argue with you. What's the use? I hate a quarrel. Why don't you go? Don't you see that I have had enough of you? Don't you see that I am annoyed with it all?" Catherine was walking impatiently up and down the room, tearing the roses at her belt--his roses--and flinging the petals on the floor. "I hope I shall never see you again." Then, in a lower tone, "(No, I can never love him. I am thoroughly convinced of that.) What are you waiting for? No, I shan't say good-bye. I shouldn't feel it. I am thoroughly miserable. I thought you were such a good friend of mine, too. I can't be polite. I'm tired of being polite when I feel rude. I am tired of hearing all this twaddle about marrying college girls. I think you might have had more tact." Catherine rushed from the room and upstairs.

Jack Livingston heard the door at the top of the stairs shut, not quite gently.

Catherine Neville was a junior at Bryn Mawr. Most people considered her proud because of a certain haughty reserved exterior, but her intimate friends who had pierced the reserve knew her to possess a really genial nature, and on occasions to become quite mellow and entertaining. But it was only with a favoured few that she descended to jocosity. She was conceited, too. There is no doubt about it, but who that ever amounts to anything isn't? at least just a little bit. Perhaps she was spoiled. But if that was the case, it was scarcely her fault, because she was an only child, and had always been pampered and praised and led to consider herself a really remarkable young person. As a small child her mother had looked upon her as a budding genius, and had cherished and retailed to forcedly enthusiastic friends her various idiosyncracies--undoubted signs of genius. But when she grew a little older, and scorned dolls and "The Five Little Peppers," things had gone too far. "A little genius is all very well, but a great deal is so conspicuous," Mrs. Neville used to say. (The Nevilles belonged to a very old Philadelphia family.) The last straw in a long line of disappointments came, however, when Catherine announced her intention of going to college. "A daughter of the Nevilles in college! Preposterous! It is all very well for a girl who has her own living to make. But a Neville!" And Mrs. Neville and Mrs. Neville's friends held up their hands in indignant, old-fashioned horror. Catherine had also indelicate aspirations toward a career. But

she kept these to herself until she was safely launched upon her freshman year. Even then her plans were very misty. She thought perhaps she would consent to being considered a second Mrs. Browning, or possibly a George Eliot. It was a dreadful blow to Mr. and Mrs. Neville when Catherine passed all her examinations. Up to that time they had kept themselves happy with the thought that Catherine might fail. Of course Catherine was very clever, but they had always heard that it took a monstrosity to pass the Bryn Mawr entrance examinations. Mr. and Mrs. Neville were especially vexed because their plans had all been upset, and they had formed such delightful ones, too. She was to have a "coming out" tea in November, followed by a series of dinners, culminating in a ball early in January--with a possible wedding at Easter. What more could a girl wish? But Catherine was undoubtedly peculiar. She refused to be trotted out at teas and put through her paces at the Monday evening dancing class. She said that dinners bored her, and balls were a frightful nuisance, and she didn't want to be married off. And so it was that Catherine never "came out," but passed into that atmosphere of social depravity and advanced ideas that old-fashioned conventionality has associated with a woman's college.

Is it to be wondered at that Catherine had lost her self-control just a little bit this evening? College with her was a very tender subject. Nevertheless as she stood upstairs with her head near the crack of the slammed door waiting to hear the front door latch, she felt desperately ashamed of herself. But how could she be expected to give up the pet dreams of her youth--all at once and for a man? She didn't like him much, anyway, and she still longed for her career. In fact she quite expected it and such an emergency as falling in love had never once entered her mind. Of course she had seen a great deal of Jack, but he had never been anything to her, at all. Yet he was quite nice, infinitely nicer than the rest of the men. They bored her. The conceited little idiots thought every girl they saw in love with them, and that all they had to do was to sit and be adored. But Jack somehow was different. He had so much more to him. He was so big and fine, so noble looking. He had such good-looking shoulders. Somehow she liked to see them around. She might have stood him for his shoulders, at least, until the end of the Christmas vacation. But it did make her furious to hear men run down college girls and say that they didn't want to marry them. Just as if the college girls were pining for them! Men would be much nicer if they didn't consider themselves charmers. "Still it will be frightfully dull now for the last few days at home," Catherine thought as she fixed her hair. She was used to seeing him about. And now no one would ask her to go skating. She didn't want to go skating with any one else. And they used to have such interesting talks together too! Well, it was all over now. She might as well go to sleep. So she snuggled up in the down comfortable and said she would make her mind a blank. But there was always a little something there, edging her on to the forbidden subject with most annoying insistence. Jack was always mixed up in her thoughts, and she kept wondering if he really cared for her. Of course it was nothing to her. But it is nice to be liked, and somehow it worried Catherine dreadfully to think that perhaps he didn't care for her. "Oh, but he must care or he never would have spoken as he did," Catherine exclaimed out loud. And then, frightened at her own voice, she muffled her head in the bedclothes.

* * * * *

Catherine's thoughts wandered off to her freshman year and that afternoon early in spring when she had received the telegram from her father--

"Mr. Livingston will call at eight o'clock.

"W. D. NEVILLE."

Catherine had read it slowly for the second time and wondered who on earth "Mr. Livingston" was and what she had done that deserved this punishment. She finally decided that Mr. Livingston was a friend of her father's, some nice old gentleman who took an interest in the higher education of women, and wanted to be taken around the college. "Night's a bad time," she reflected, and speculated happily on the chances of \$10,000 toward the library building. Nevertheless she did not feel quite comfortable until she was safely at dinner with the doors closed. One never knows what elderly men interested in the higher education of women may do. They are always so intensely interested. He might come out in time for dinner, just for the beneficial experience of seeing how this strange product of the human race eats, and whether or not, as has been said, it lives exclusively on fish. "He is probably of a deeply enquiring nature and will want statistics," Catherine mused. "I must review mine. Let me see. There are sixty-seven 'grads,' one hundred and nine freshmen, and----" But, alas! these were all she knew. Well, she could at least explain the "Group System." A complexity of that sort would be something for the old gentleman to gloat over. She knew it quite well now. She had just had some lessons on it from the sophomore next door. And then, of course, there was the seventeen per cent. statistic. How stupid in her to forget that! She had heard it often enough, at least twice a month since she entered. "Yes, that will make a very good beginning," and Catherine sprinkled her beef so vigorously with salt that she was forced to send for a second supply.

Dinner had just reached the salad stage, when the maid whispered to Catherine, in mysterious tones, that there was a gentleman in the hall who wished to see her. "Mr. Livingston!" she gasped, and rushed out. "How fortunate that dinner is almost over! But perhaps the poor man is starving. Oh! but I can't have him in. I'll be hard-hearted. I'll hope that he had a chicken sandwich and a glass of milk at Broad Street Station. But what a strange man for father to send!" Catherine thought as she cordially grasped the hand of a beery object in the dark corner of the hall. "I beg yir pardin, miss, but I'm Jim Maloney, and me wife as does yir laundree is very poor, en has siven childrin en wants to be paid." The man held toward her a soiled, rumpled half sheet of lined paper. "One dollar and twenty-nine cents," Catherine read between the blots, and remarked to herself that there were only five children last week. But supposing there had been twins, she ran singing upstairs and munificently raised the amount to one dollar and thirty cents. "The dollar and a quarter is easy, but four cents is such a difficult amount!" she said, excusing her extravagance, while taking her seat at the dinner table again. "One always has to hunt through all one's coat pockets, stamp boxes, and various trays and receptacles on the bureau, and do at least fifty cents' worth of nervous worry and scurry, perhaps even then not finding the four cents." Catherine was happy again, for

she still had forty minutes of liberty, ample time in which mentally to run through a possible conversation with an inquisitive elderly gentleman and arrange all her material in paragraphs with a suitable introduction and conclusion. She felt as if she were going to make an address, and had a wild desire to begin. "Esteemed elderly gentleman, it gives me great pleasure to expound to you this evening the--etc." But of course that would never do.

At exactly five minutes after eight Mr. Livingston's card was handed to Catherine. "Elderly and investigating gentlemen are exasperatingly prompt," she murmured. "He has evidently taken the 7:15 train from the city and has killed time about the campus or been lost for ten minutes," she thought, as she glided downstairs, settling the bow of her ribbon collar primly in front. "Yes, Mr. Livingston," she rehearsed, "the freshman class contains one hundred and seven girls, average age, eighteen; average height, five feet five inches; average weight---- Oh, dear me! I've forgotten my average weight, and that was to have led to such interesting discussions of the comparative amount of nutriment in the different preferred foods."

Just at this moment Catherine reached the door of the reception-room, gave her belt a last little twitch straight and walked in. From the least brilliantly lighted corner of the room arose a tall, broad-shouldered man of twenty-five. Poor fellow! He had shrunk there from pursuing pairs of eyes! "Dear me, it isn't the inquisitive, elderly gentleman after all," Catherine pouted disappointedly as she and Mr. Livingston took their seats at the extreme ends of a long sofa. "Now, my plans are all upset." Catherine wanted to say, "Who are you, anyway? Why aren't you inquisitive and elderly? That type is so interesting!" But that didn't seem polite, and he looked harmless, so she spoke of the weather, and the walk from the station, the ride out in the train, and the people one sees in Broad Street Station, and hoped that time would unfold the mystery. Just then the top of a head and two eyes rose perpendicularly above the window-sill in front of them, remained stationary for a few seconds, and then sank slowly, followed by a suppressed giggle and the sound of fleeing footsteps. They both saw the eyes, and both being interested in proceedings outdoors, forgot for a moment the absence of conversation.

"Yes, Mr. Livingston," Catherine finally droned forth absent-mindedly. "There are one hundred and seven in the freshman class, average age, eighteen, average height, five feet five inches, average weight, two hundred and eighty pounds, and only seventeen per cent. will marry! At least----"

"How extraordinary!" interrupted Mr. Livingston, while Catherine awoke with a start and wondered if a little fresh air would not be beneficial to both of them. Another pair of eyes arose above the window-sill. There was a second pause and Mr. Livingston said that he thought it would be delightful to look at the grounds. They waited a moment just to satisfy the curiosity of a third pair of eyes and then wandered out on to the campus. It was deliciously balmy, but as it was nine o'clock on a moonless night their horizon was limited. Still by peering industriously they could distinguish a few dark objects that Catherine explained to be trees, and by means of her descriptive powers (she never knew she had any until that night), Mr. Livingston was enabled to enjoy the distant

prospect of Rosemont and the rolling hills beyond. When they returned to the reception-room, Catherine felt quite recovered from her little attack of absent-mindedness and hoped that the air had been equally beneficial to her uncommunicative visitor. "I have been talking too much," she thought as she watched the careful descent of eyes number four. "Poor Mr. Livingston has not had a chance to enlighten me on the subject of his personal history. I must be silent." A fifth pair of eyes appeared at the window, and the silence was unbroken for such a long time that Catherine in desperation launched forth upon Political Economy theories. (Political Economy and History were her majors, and she always turned to them in times of need.)

And so it continued all evening. Catherine was still ignorant of her visitor's history, but she had counted twenty-seven pairs of eyes. She wondered if Mr. Livingston's and her count agreed. She had counted hers on her fingers, but had a dreadful feeling that she had made a mistake of a hand somewhere and was five too many. Mr. Livingston looked mathematical. She longed to ask him how many he had seen. Finally the witching hour of ten arrived. There was a scampering of footsteps through the hall and a long tolling of Taylor bell. A maid wandered uneasily up and down before the reception-room door. Catherine knew it was time to put the lights out, but somehow said nothing, for she had noticed certain symptoms of uneasiness in her visitor, and felt they were about to culminate in the "good-bye" that had been worrying him since half-past nine. They did culminate, at twenty minutes after ten, when he at length departed. Catherine wondered why men stay two hours and a quarter when they come for a half-hour call. Perhaps they think that they don't appear to be enjoying themselves if they leave before their two hours and a quarter is up. The substance of the letter that Catherine had mailed to her father that night briefly stated would read: "Who on earth is Mr. Livingston? Please restrain him from calling again."

* * * * *

Gradually Catherine returned to the present. She didn't see how Jack could care very much. Then she bounced over on to the cold side of the bed and held her eyes tight shut. Still her thoughts rambled on.

The next day Catherine looked pale and wan. Her mother thought she had better stay in bed and rest because there were only four days left of the vacation and she mustn't go back to college all worn out. But Catherine thought she needed air. The house oppressed her, so she decided to go for a walk in her most becoming clothes. Jack always went to the office between nine and half-past. Perhaps she might meet him. But what could she do if she did meet him? Bow stiffly? That would not be especially satisfactory, but what else could she do? She couldn't appear sorry for what she had said last night. And yet she would like to have him find it out--indirectly. No, she wouldn't go to walk. It wouldn't look well. She would take her mother's advice after all, and go to bed.

Jack in the meantime felt like a culprit. He had spoiled everything by his inane lack of judgment. He ought to have known better. He should at least have remembered the career. It was all up with him now. But he felt sure she liked him. If he had only made a few pretty speeches,

complimented her a little and broken the ice gently! He feared he had been a little abrupt. But it wasn't his fault if he couldn't talk. He meant a lot more than the other fellows who have it all at their fingers' ends. But girls never can appreciate fine men. Anything does, if it is only well-dressed. And yet Catherine had really shown a great deal of discretion. In fact she had openly preferred him to the other men. Somehow she had always evinced much pleasure in his conversation. Perhaps it was because he listened to her theories and the other men wouldn't. Oh, but it couldn't have been that! Anyway, he had enjoyed hearing her talk. He couldn't bear the chatter of most girls. Yes, she was a fine girl, always well groomed and a thoroughbred, the kind of girl with whom a man liked to be seen walking down the street. Perhaps she hadn't meant it all. He thought he ought to call again, but he didn't exactly care to go where he wasn't wanted. Still he decided to throw aside his pride and call that evening at the Nevilles, just as if nothing had happened.

But all his hopes were shattered when the maid informed him at the door that Miss Catherine could not see any one that evening. "A polite way of asking me not to call again," thought Livingston, as he hurried off. He was really annoyed now and vowed never to go near the place again. The maid forgot to tell Catherine about the call.

John Livingston had recently been admitted as junior partner into the firm of W. D. Neville & Co. His rise had been rather phenomenal. Five years ago, in the summer time, three weeks after receiving his A. B., he started out bravely to work his way up in the world from the very beginning, and having entered the steel and iron works as an ordinary labourer, he had come to be a foreman of the shops. It was then that he attracted attention by his remarkable industry and popularity among the workmen, and thus came to Mr. Neville's notice. Mr. Neville at once appreciated his clear business head and knack of getting along well with men and pushed him on, so that he passed from one position of trust to another until he was finally admitted into the firm as a junior partner.

Worldly people might have imagined that Mr. Neville had designs when he sent Jack Livingston out to call on his daughter at Bryn Mawr, and when he encouraged his coming to the Neville house, especially during the holidays. Frequently--two or three times a week--Jack was asked to dine until it became such an expected event that he always stayed to dinner without being asked. But any one who knew the family at all well would laugh at the worldly idea, for Mr. Neville well knew the fruitlessness of forming designs upon Catherine's future. In fact no one realized so well as Mr. Neville that Catherine had no time for anything except her career and that she didn't care for men. All she wanted was peace and a name for herself. Perhaps Mr. Neville was dubious about Catherine's ability to become a Mrs. Browning or a George Eliot. (He was an exceedingly practical man.) "Of course Catherine is exceptionally clever," he used to say. Nevertheless he felt or at least hoped that her mind was well balanced, and doubted the arrival of those expected bursts of genius on which she built so many castles in the air.

During the four days that remained of the Christmas vacation, Jack persistently refused to come to the Neville house to dinner. He was always busy packing or something. This was a bad sign. To be sure Jack was going to Chicago in a week, but every one knows that a man never

starts his packing until eleven o'clock on the night before his departure. He goes into the first store he sees on the day of his arrival, buys all the things he has forgotten and never again mentions the subject. Therefore Mr. Neville was a little worried, but he kept quiet and reassured himself by thinking that Jack's shunning the Neville house was merely a phase in an ultimately satisfactory love affair. He did not tell Mrs. Neville his plans or his woes. He knew her too well, and never confided delicate little matters like this to her kind-hearted, bungling management. Poor Mrs. Neville! with the best intentions in the world, she always ruined everything.

Catherine, in the meantime, was not at all like herself. She moped, scolded, and was generally irritable and unpleasant. Her mother could not imagine what had happened. Catherine was so changed; she sat around and looked mysterious and gloomy and absolutely refused to go anywhere. To be sure she had never been riotous in her pursuit of pleasure, but still she had always gone about a good deal, and had really seemed to enjoy things in a characteristically unbending way. But now all was different. Mrs. Neville was in despair and promptly jumped to the conclusion that Catherine was suffering from nervous prostration brought on by overwork at college. Mrs. Neville had always said she would have it, and really there was nothing else that could make her act so queerly. "Catherine is so energetic," she told her friends when they came to console. (They all felt sorry for Bessie Neville. Her daughter was such a disappointment. Their own daughters all did embroidery in the morning, and went to teas with their mothers in the afternoon.) "Catherine must be in everything," she said, "and never is satisfied to do things half-way. No wonder the child has broken down. I shan't let her go back. No," and she set her mouth firmly, "health after all is the first thing to consider." Nevertheless their old family physician persuaded her that there was nothing like work for nervous prostration, so Catherine, in spite of the firmly set mouth, appeared at college just in time to register. However, she was loaded down with pills, tonics and strict injunctions to write all developments of symptoms.

Catherine was glad to get back. She had never spent such a disappointing holiday. Yet though she felt horribly mournful and wandered about with the gloomy, tragic expression of a person with a past, she hoped she could fight it down, work and forget everything. She would either have to do that or be wretched always. For she knew Jack would never come near her again. Of course she did not want to see him. She was simply annoyed at his neglect. Why, from what her mother said, it seemed as if Jack had absolutely planned his "good-bye" call at the house to miss her, and had then apologized as if he hadn't known. Well, everything had happened for the best. She was really becoming too much interested in Jack Livingston. But now she could forget it all, and work and make something out of her life.

With mid-years, a twenty-four page essay, Latin and English private reading and all sorts of unfinished odds and ends of labour, one's previous misfortunes vanish behind the rapidly accumulating wretchedness of the four weeks after the Christmas vacation. This is the period at Bryn Mawr when one wonders what on earth became of the first part of the semester, and one firmly resolves this time at least to keep good resolutions and never again be guilty of such improvident idleness; this is the period when one wakes up on bright, crisp mornings to the

wretched realization that an examination is due next day in a subject of which one knows or feels that one knows absolutely nothing; this is the period when, after struggles too painful to describe, one turns up on the fatal morning pallid but resolute, armed with a pen and scraggy blotter and with Tennyson's immortal words "theirs but to do or die," ringing in one's ears; this is the period when after seizing the examination questions one thrills or congeals in proportion to the number of intimate friends, bowing acquaintances or total strangers there enrolled. Nevertheless one survives even the worst, though in a more or less battered condition, and after two weeks punctuated with these periods of violent searching thought and despairing drains on the imagination, one at length emerges into the happy serenity of the middle of February.

So Catherine having passed through the wear and tear of mid-years had almost recovered from her attack of nervous prostration. One day she was sitting on the floor in her study chatting happily with some friends. They had finished their chocolate, and the empty cups had been pushed just wherever it was most convenient to put them and most inconvenient for them to be, when Emily Ashurst broke into the general talk with, "By the way, Catherine, I had a letter this morning from a friend of mine in Chicago, which I think will probably interest you. You know Jack Livingston, don't you?" Catherine nodded, and grew a little pinker than usual. "You know, he went to Chicago early in January on business connected with some steel works out there. Well, he was quite popular and taken around a lot and now they say he is engaged to a girl there, a Miss Lyla--oh, bother!--well she is exceedingly pretty--just the sweet, piquant marrying kind that a man adores. They say it was a most romantic affair. Sort of love at first sight. He is perfectly devoted and her friends are delighted with the match. Mr. Livingston has taken them all by storm." But Catherine was not particularly enthusiastic, so the conversation drifted on to basket ball possibilities for the spring. Catherine, however, was not in the least interested in basket ball now, though she was considered one of the most promising forwards. She felt awfully tired, and was secretly relieved when there was a general uprising from the floor and all her guests departed in a flock. Then she was left to her own unhappy thoughts and the concentration of chocolate cups in the one spot that always appealed most strongly to the naturally sympathetic disposition of the maid when she came to straighten up in the morning.

"Jack didn't care at all then," she said, and swallowed a pill. She felt that her nervous prostration was returning, and the pills were the least objectionable of the medicines. "If he had cared he never would have become engaged within six weeks," she sighed. But she didn't see why she should care. He was nothing to her. But her father would be so disappointed. He was interested in Jack and didn't approve of men under thirty getting married. And then it really was most inconsiderate after the way he had spoken to her. "I suppose I shall have to write and congratulate him. That's a bore! I never know what to say to engaged people, anyway. Yet I should like to write to him, just to show that there is no ill-feeling, and that I am really quite pleased to hear that he has at last persuaded some one to take him. I'll make the letter rather stiff and formal. Yes, I must write. But suppose he isn't engaged after all, wouldn't it seem as if I were forcing myself into a correspondence with him? No, it wouldn't appear well to write, at least,

until the engagement was confirmed." Catherine glowed with newly awakened hope. She was glad she had decided not to write, for she dreaded to involve herself in any more awkward predicaments. They were so wearing on the mind.

In the meantime the day was drawing near when Catherine's story must be handed in for The Lantern. But nothing seemed to have developed. On several occasions she had sat down, well provided with white receptive sheets of paper, ready to pour out her soul. She had gnawed her pencil and looked bored for half an hour, and then had jumped up and rushed outdoors for some fresh air. Each time she had been expectant and eager to jot down the ideas she thought would crowd into her mind. (One never knows what may happen when one is actually provided with pencil and paper.) But somehow nothing had come, and she really felt now that she was altogether too wretched for ideas.

In desperation she decided to prune and nourish a little love story based on her own affair. It would amuse her, and no one need know that it was not purely imaginary. You can make things so much more real and vivid when drawing from your own feelings and experiences. Of course she would exaggerate a great deal and make it more interesting. And in her story the heroine could write a letter of congratulation to the hero in Chicago, a letter meant to be cold and formal, but into which had crept, in spite of herself, a plaintive, sorrowful strain. (Catherine thought that part quite romantic.) The hero on receipt of the letter could be very much mystified. He was not engaged and had no intentions of becoming engaged, though there had been a rumour. But reading between the lines he should see the heroine's love for him--this part of course could be entirely imaginary--pack his dress-suit case and take the first train for Philadelphia. He should then rush out to Bryn Mawr and throw himself at the heroine's feet, and all would end happily. (Catherine sighed deeply.)

The end, however, presented difficulties, for where should she have the hero throw himself at the heroine's feet? The reception-room was such a public place. (She thought of the pursuing pairs of eyes that hunt one out of the darkest corners of reception-rooms.) Finally she fixed upon the Vaux woods. It was such a picturesque spot, she knew Jack would have liked it. "Yes," she said to herself, "he must restrain his feelings until the heroine has bowed him into a portion of the Vaux woods, where they will be uninterrupted by giggles."

The story was handed in, and toward the end of May made its appearance in the pages of The Lantern.

* * * * *

In the meantime Jack Livingston, on the shores of Lake Michigan, was becoming desperately tired of going to dinners and looking out for the Chicago interests of the firm. He wanted to see some one who really cared for him, some one who would ask him out to dinner, even if he did not represent W. D. Neville & Co., of Philadelphia. He wanted to be asked out, fondled and admired a little for himself. Perhaps he was homesick. At any rate he decided to shirk social duties and spend an evening quietly with the Hammersleys. There was such an air of homelikeness and happiness about their evenings. Charlie Hammersley had

been an upper classman of his at college, who had married a Bryn Mawr girl a few months before. And now they had a cozy little box just within the margin of respectability of the North End. They were still at dinner when Jack arrived. So he threw himself into an armchair by the library table and reached out for a magazine. The first he threw aside; he was tired of actresses' pictures, and hated novelettes. But something prompted him to investigate the next, though it was unfamiliar. "_The Lantern_, Bryn Mawr," he gasped in pleasant surprise, while he ran his eye eagerly down the table of contents for a certain well-known name. Before long he was buried in Catherine's little love story.

When the Hammersleys came in from the dining-room, they found Jack standing with one arm against the mantelpiece and a far-away expression in his eyes. He started when he saw them with an, "Oh! ... awfully glad to find you in ... You see I've just dropped in to say good-bye before starting for Philadelphia, to-morrow morning."

"Philadelphia?" Mrs. Hammersley asked in surprise. "You're an old fraud. I won't believe a word of it. You know you said you never wanted to see the place again. Besides you sent word by the maid that we mustn't hurry because you had come to spend one of those old-fashioned eight-to-eleven evenings with us. Shall it be whist or hearts to-night? Lyla, you'll make a fourth? ... Let's have hearts to-night. I don't feel strong enough for whist."

"No, really, I can't. You know, I should like it above all things. But I have my trunk to pack and arrangements to make. I'm going rather suddenly. You see I've just decided." Jack wished he was not clutching "_The Lantern_" so tightly in his left hand.

* * * * *

At Bryn Mawr finals were over and the "Varsity" had been picked, so that all excitement was now centred in the *alumnæ* game. After years of success, the undergraduates had got into the way of looking upon this game as a walk-over. (It is hardly the fault of the *alumnæ* if one or more years of leisure do not add to their agility!) But now that the *alumnæ* had the last year's seniors, the champions of the college, to choose from, the under-graduates secretly trembled.

For this reason there was unusual excitement over the game, and the greater part of the college was sitting cross-legged around the basket ball field cheering excitedly, while a few rushed importantly up and down, flourishing lemons and towels. It was the beginning of the second half, and neither side had scored. The undergraduates felt weak, while the small group of *alumnæ* at one corner of the field were clutching each other excitedly. Every one was too much interested in the game to notice a tall, broad shouldered man who had just joined the outskirts of the crowd and was anxiously following with his eyes every movement of the 'Varsity's most graceful forward. But two minutes of play remained, the ball seemed rooted in the *alumnæ* territory and the undergraduates were pale and heaving with suppressed woe, when the *alumnæ* lost the ball and it passed quickly down the field into the hands of the 'Varsity's tall, graceful forward. For one silent second she aimed, and then amid shrieks of joy the ball spun cleanly into the basket, while, with a little gasp of pain, Catherine Neville, the 'Varsity's pet forward, sank

fainting upon the ground. Her ankle was badly sprained. When Catherine recovered consciousness, the tall, broad shouldered man from the outskirts of the crowd, was leaning over her, a most distressed expression in his eyes. In spite of her pain, Catherine gave a little gasp of pleasure. "He does care for me after all," she murmured under her breath. Her eyes grew dim and she felt herself going off again into unconsciousness.

Another summer had passed by and the juniors were now seniors, but one of the most popular members of the class was missing. Catherine Neville was to be married in November. As she said to one of her friends, she was satisfied, and Jack was satisfied, and they didn't see why they should wait. Anyway, Jack was awfully lonely out in Chicago, all by himself, and it was her duty to go out and cheer him up.

Catherine had decided upon her career. She had found her purpose in life.

DESERTS OF THE NEW WORLD:--PRAIRIES, PAMPAS, LLANOS.

by Arthur Mangin; Translator: W.H. Adams

from *The Desert World*

EBook #43396

They who study the philosophy of history, of which men talk so much, and know so little; they who seek in the general laws of nature and the physical economy of the globe an explanation of its ethnological phenomena, may find, it seems to me, a curious subject for investigation in the singular destiny of the New World. They will have to ascertain by what concurrence of circumstances the two Americas, separated from us by an immensity of waters, and revealed to the world of the East but some four centuries ago, shall have traversed in so brief a period the successive phases of conquest, colonization, and emancipation; why European emigration was directed thitherward at the very beginning; and thitherward continues still to flow from every quarter; finally, by what tacit and unanimous agreement this New World has become the adopted country of all the proscribed and disinherited of the Old; while almost the entire area of the African continent, which is so much more readily accessible, is scarcely less favoured in its climatic conditions, and upon which the white race has rested, from the remotest antiquity, its political institutions, its arts, and its industry, has remained uninfluenced by the advancing tide of civilization.

I limit myself to indicating this problem, which, however, it is not within my present province to examine, but which naturally suggests itself when we think of the swift development undergone by the European societies planted on the American continent--when we remember how rapidly they are narrowing the area of the desert and the wilderness. At the epoch of the discovery of the New World it was one vast desolation, with the exception of Mexico and Peru; and these were but the seats of a civilization which seemed to have passed without transition from infancy to old age, from vigour to decrepitude, and which crumbled into dust under the pitiless blows of the Spanish conquerors. Neither Cortez nor Pizarro would have overthrown a great empire with a handful of foot-soldiers and men-at-arms, a squadron or two of horse, and a few unwieldy guns, had not the Colossus already nodded to its fall, had not the Column been hollow at the base. But soon the European nations shared among themselves this immense country and the neighbouring islands. The Slave race, whose destiny it seemed to be to reign among the polar ice and snow, long contented itself with the inclement and inhospitable region of the extreme north-west, which it has but recently surrendered to the United States Government. The Anglo-Saxon race, in the northern continent, has seized the lion's share. It now holds between the two oceans, from the fifty-fifth to the thirtieth parallels of north latitude, a fertile and life-breathing territory, well fitted to be the cradle of great empires; the flourishing Confederation of Canada, the colony of British Columbia, and the mighty republic of the United States. Virgin forests have fallen before the restless axe of the hardy pioneer; hundreds of populous cities have risen as if by enchantment in districts haunted within the memory of men by the bear and the wild buffalo; a network of railways spreads from the Atlantic almost to the base of the Rocky Mountains; crops of waving corn bloom over wide prairies that a few years ago yielded only the tall grass and waving reed; the aboriginal tribes of the Red Indians have melted away before

the impetuous tide of an ever-advancing civilization; and the exhaustless energies of our race have already raised in less than a century two mighty empires on the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence, destined to a marvellous, a changeful, and doubtlessly a glorious history. And both these empires have sprung from the loins of England, are governed in the main by the same laws, hold the same religion, are animated by the same aspiring and unwearied genius, and

"Speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spoke; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held;"

in everything, as we believe,

"Are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold."[88]

Southward from the thirtieth parallel stretches the domain of the Latin races, already mingled with and being absorbed by the Anglo-Saxon, in Canada, California, and the Southern States of the Union. Vast as this region is, for it comprehends all Central America and all the Southern Continent, it is infinitely less prosperous, less powerful, less peopled, than what we may call Saxon America. Mexico is a byword and a reproach for savage anarchy and murderous license. Neither Chili, nor Peru, nor even Brazil approaches Canada in solid power and the auspicious promise of future greatness. The Latin race seems dwarfed and cowed by the neighbourhood of the energetic Anglo-Saxon, is swiftly retiring before it in North America, and in the course of centuries will probably be subjugated by it, even in the southern division of the great Continent.

A considerable portion of South America, however, is uncultivated, unpeopled, and but imperfectly explored. There the Desert re-appears with--

"The pale, cold aspect of a wearied friend,"[89]

under its most sharply defined forms and most impressive conditions. The supremacy of the whites over the indigenous tribes is almost nominal; and if the latter are gradually dying out, the catastrophe, in this instance, is due rather to their own lack of vigour, energy, and capacity, than to the pressure of civilization.

However rapid may be the growth of population in North America, however great the rapidity--shall we say the avidity?--of the American _squatters_ in their conquest and appropriation of the soil, the Desert still occupies, principally in "the far West" and the North--that is to say, in the angle comprised between the line of the great lakes and the Rocky Mountains--an area almost equal to the whole of Continental Europe. There we find, as Mr. Johnstone points out, the largest plains in the world. One such, for example, is that immense basin which extends from the mouths of the Mackenzie, in the icy Arctic Sea, even to the remote Delta of the Mississippi, and from the huge chain of the Rocky Mountains, with their piny recesses and snowy peaks, to the less rugged and more pastoral range of the Alleghanies; a total area of 4,400,000,000 square yards (3,245,000 square miles). A table-land of

gentle elevation, nowhere above 1500 feet, and rarely more than 700 feet high, separates this territory into two secondary basins.

The _north-east_, which pours its waters into the Arctic Ocean, Hudson's Bay, and through the Canadian lakes and River St. Lawrence, into the Atlantic; and,

The _south_ basin, of the Missouri-Mississippi, whose mighty waters flow into the Gulf of Mexico.

It is in the latter that the traveller encounters the great grassy plains of the _Prairies_ or _Savannahs_ which are so remarkable a feature of North America, and which chiefly lie along the western bank of the Mississippi. "There are no prairies," says Sir J. Richardson, "to the north of Peace River, and the level lands which border the Rocky Mountains do not extend beyond the Great Salt Lake."

Under so wide a range of latitude the plain necessarily embraces a great variety of soil, climate, and productions; but being almost in a state of nature, it is characterized in its central and southern parts by interminable grassy savannahs and enormous forests, and in the far north by deserts not less dreary than those of Siberia.[90]

Southward, a bare sandy waste, 400 or 500 miles wide, skirts the base of the Rocky Mountains to the forty-first parallel of north latitude. The dry plains of Texas and the upper region of the Arkansas have all the features of Asiatic table-lands; further to the north, the lifeless, treeless steppes on the high grounds of the far West are burnt up in summer, and frozen in winter by biting blasts from the Rocky Mountains. Towards the Mississippi the soil improves, but its delta is a labyrinth of streams, and lakes, and dense brushwood, and the rank marshes at its mouth cover an area of 35,000 square miles. "There are also," says Mrs. Somerville, "large tracts of forest and saline ground, especially the Grand Saline between the rivers Arkansas and Neseikelongo, which is often covered two or three inches deep with salt, like a fall of snow. All the cultivation on the right bank of the river is along the Gulf of Mexico and in the adjacent provinces, and is entirely tropical, consisting of sugar-cane, cotton, and indigo. The prairies, so characteristic of North America, then begin."

And what are these prairies?

Leagues upon leagues of rolling meadow-land, sometimes as level as an English pasture, always as boundless, apparently, as the sea; richly covered with long rank grass of tender green, and lighted up by flowers of the liliaceous kind which scent the air with fragrance. Here and there, in the north, occur clumps of oak and black walnut; in the south, groups of tulip, and cotton, and magnolia trees. Occasionally the monotonous scene is relieved by a lazy brook, whose banks bloom with a brilliant mass of azaleas, kalmias, rhododendrons, and andromedas; the low howl of the cayote, or prairie dog, breaks the silence; and life is given to the landscape by the frequent appearance of herds of bison, deer, and wild horses. At times, in the remote districts, the prairie wolves will be seen in some leafy covert awaiting the approach of a victim; or flights of birds darken the air, and tempt the traveller with the promise of an abundant provision.

On the right bank of the Missouri, and on the borders of the White River, in the territory of Nebraska, lies a dreary desert valley, some 30 feet deep, which the French expressively designate les *Mauvaises-Terres*. It may be doubted whether the whole world offers a stranger or a more impressive landscape. Here geology recognizes the vestiges of an astonishing diluvian labour, and it is impossible to venture a step without striking one's foot against the fossil relics of vanished animals.

It is a kind of world apart, says an American writer; a large valley which seems to have been excavated, in the first place, by an immense vertical out-throw, and then modelled by the prolonged and incessant action of denudating agents. With a mean breadth of 28, and a total length of 90 miles, it develops itself in a westerly direction, at the foot of the sombre mountain-chain known as the *Black Hills*. On issuing from the immense, uniform, and monotonous prairie, the traveller finds himself suddenly transported, after a descent of 100 to 200 feet, into a depression of the soil where rise a myriad of abrupt rocks, irregular or prismatic, or like columns dressed with enormous pyramids, and from 110 to 220 feet in height.

These natural towers are so multiplied over the surface of this extraordinary region, that the roads wind through them in narrow passages, and the labyrinth may be likened to the irregular streets and narrow alleys of some mediæval European city. Seen from afar, the interminable succession of rocks resembles the massive monuments of antiquity; nor are turrets wanting, nor flying buttresses, nor graceful arches, nor vaulted portals, groups of columns, façades, and taper spires. If at one place the eye lights upon the ruins of a feudal fortress, at another it surveys the graceful ensemble of a Saracenic mosque. Or you might almost say, in the distance, that it is a fantastic "city of the dead" which looms before you; or the gigantic palace of a race of unseen beings, fashioned by the power of spell and enchantment. And if the illusion vanishes when, descending from the heights, you penetrate into the mazes of this Dædalian marvel, the reality is not less calculated to inspire you with astonishment, and the imagination remains confused before this wild, this grand, yet ominous freak of Nature--ominous, for the place seems like a colossal Golgotha, and the rocks may be the monuments consecrated by invisible hands to the things and creatures, the life and majesty, of a forgotten Past!

A spectacle unexpected by the European traveller comes at intervals to heighten and confirm the illusion. Here and there are reared constructions of manifest human work, but of a truly primitive character. They consist of four poles, supporting a rude platform of wicker. Mount any adjacent hillock, and you will see corpses and human skeletons outstretched upon the platform. These constructions are, in truth, the burial-places of the Sioux Indians, who wander still in the neighbouring districts.

The whole coast of the Mexican Gulf, from the Pearl River eastward, through Alabama and a great part of Florida, is occupied by the so-called "pine barrens," which extend far into the interior. These "vast monotonous tracts of sand, covered with forests of gigantic pine trees," are not less a characteristic feature of North America than the

"rolling prairies." They are not limited to this part of the United States, but occur to a great extent in Virginia, North Carolina, and elsewhere. Tennessee and Kentucky, though the plough has passed over extensive areas, still possess large forests, and the Ohio flows for hundreds of miles among patriarchal trees, with a rich undergrowth of azaleas, rhododendrons, and other beautiful shrubs, bound together in chains of flowers by creeping plants. When America was discovered, one mass of unbroken forest spread over the mainland, from the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Canadian Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Atlantic Ocean it crossed the Alleghany Mountains, and spread in gloom and grandeur over the valley of the Mississippi--an ocean of vegetation swelling and sinking for upwards of one million of square miles.

"Then all the broad and boundless mainland lay,
Cooled by the interminable wood, that frowned
O'er mound and vale, where never summer ray
Glanced, till the strong tornado broke his way
Through the gray giants of the sylvan wild;
Yet many a sheltered glade, with blossoms gay,
Beneath the showery sky and sunshine mild,
Within the shaggy arms of that dark forest smiled."[91]

Prairies which, in their general aspect, resemble those of the Missouri and the Mississippi, are found to the east and west of the American Desert, in Arrisona, in Texas, in California, and various provinces of Mexico. Vegetation, however, nevertheless differs according to the conditions of each region, and the alternatives of deluging rains and extreme dryness become more and more conspicuous as we approach the Equator. Nevertheless--and this, perhaps, is the feature most distinctive of the Prairies, or Savannahs, from the Pampas and Llanos--the dryness is never sufficiently severe in the former to destroy vegetation, as is the case in the latter. But the herbs and grasses often grow so dry in summer that the most trivial accident--such as a lighted match flung carelessly away, or the ashes dropped from a hunter's pipe--will kindle the most awful conflagrations, and the flames will spread devouringly over leagues of open ground, consuming trees and shrubs, and burning to death the cattle or wild animals which haply fall within their range. With the crackling, hissing, seething noises of the fire mingle the groans of the perishing beasts, while huge clouds of smoke roll before the wind, like the billows of a wind-swept ocean, and live tongues of flame ever and anon light up the terrible scene with lurid splendour. These "Prairie-fires" are sometimes kindled in revenge by the Indians, and occasionally the settlers resort to this dangerous but summary method of clearing the encumbered ground. However caused, the spectacle is one of infinite grandeur, which might have furnished Dante with a fresh image of horror for his "Inferno."

From the fortieth to the thirty-fifth parallels of north latitude the Desert appears in North America under a form more like the "seas of sand" of Africa and Arabia; the vast areas of the _Llanos_ and the _Pampas_. These two words are nearly synonymous. They are used to designate wide level plains, inundated and fertile in the rainy season, but in the hot season stripped by the sun's rays of every apparent trace of vegetation. Between the Californian Alps and the Rio-Colorado withers a grand, sandy, and utterly barren plain, which touches the northern borders of La Sonora. Somewhat further to the east extends the

Llano-Estacado, which eventually merges into the American Desert. But the most considerable Pampas and Llanos belong to South America. Of these, the most arid and the most desolate--which most vividly recall the rainless deserts of the Old World--are the Pampa of Atacama, between the Andes and the Pacific, with Taracapa on the north, and Copiapo on the south; that of Sechura, which forms a great portion of the littoral of the Peruvian department of Truxillo; and that of Pernambuco, which forms the major part of the plateau north-east of Brazil.

These Deserts, no less than those of Africa and Arabia, merit the name of the "Land of Fear."

Their surface is as smooth as that of the calm sea, and bounded only by the circular line of the horizon; the eye frequently ranges over a space of twenty-five square miles without meeting a clump of trees on which to rest; nor is the monotony relieved by the slightest undulation of the soil. Everywhere is nothingness, silence, desolation, death. More than one wayfarer has never escaped from their mazy solitudes. Fatigue, hunger, thirst, decimate the caravans which undertake to traverse them, and the track is marked by whitened skeletons, whose flesh has been devoured by vultures, and which unknown hands have piled up and arranged with a ghastly symmetry of order.

However, since the discovery of America, certain portions of the Llanos have become habitable. Towns have risen at intervals on the banks of the rivers which water them. These centres of population are connected with each other by huts of reeds, covered with ox-hides, and separated by about a day's march. Here reside the Llaneros, to whose charge are intrusted the innumerable herds of cattle, horses, and mules, which subsist on the pasturage of the Steppes.

The inhabitants of the Llanos possess characteristics as marked as those of their plains. The hatos wherein they assemble are situated at long distances apart; but the true home of the llanero, a bold and skilful horseman, is his saddle. Firmly seated on his rapid steed, he gallops at will across the trackless plain, and combining the two extremes of solitude and activity, confines his half-savage existence to the custody or the ownership of his herds of horses and cattle. Thus, born in the Llanos like his father, a descendant of the first Spanish settlers, he has no idea of any other country than his southern pastures, of any other career than his dreamy pastoral life. Clothed in a picturesque costume, half Spanish, half Indian; his machete (or cutlass) thrust through a belt of leather, his poncho (a chequered mantle) over his shoulder, and the redoubtable lasso suspended in a coil to his saddle-bow; armed with the clumsy lance, which serves to drive his herd before him, and, at need, to vindicate its owner's courage in some partisan affray; the llanero, never thinking of the past, never dreaming of the future, on the alert in every danger, and accustomed to the severest privations, enjoys with intoxication the rude happiness of his wild freedom.

The Llanos of Venezuela occupy a superficial area, estimated, according to Humboldt, at 153,000 square miles, between the deltas of the Orinoco and the river Coqueta. They are as flat as the surface of the sea, and covered with long rank grass. You might travel over the dreary level for 1100 miles from the delta of the Orinoco to the foot of the Andes of

Pasto, and frequently not encounter an eminence a foot high in 270 square miles. Their length is twice that of their breadth; and as the wind blows constantly from the east, the climate is the more ardent the further west. "These Steppes, for the most part," says Mrs. Somerville,[92] "are destitute of trees or bushes, yet in some places they are dotted with the mauritia and other palms." Flat as they are, two kinds of inequalities will sometimes occur: one consists of banks or shoals of grit or compact limestone, five or six feet high, perfectly level for several leagues, and imperceptible except on their edges; the other inequality can only be detected by the barometer or levelling instruments; it is called a _Mesa_, and is a gentle knoll swelling very gradually to an elevation of a few fathoms. Yet slight as is this altitude, a Mesa forms the watershed from south-west to north-east, between the affluents of the Orinoco and the streams flowing to the northern coast of Terra Firma. In the wet season, from April to the end of October, the tropical rains pour down in torrents, and hundreds of square miles of the Llanos are inundated by the overflow of the rivers. In the hollows the water is sometimes twelve feet deep, and such numbers of horses and other animals perish, that the ground smells strongly of musk, an odour peculiar to many quadrupeds. "From the flatness of the country, too, the waters of some affluents of the Orinoco are driven backwards by the floods of that river, especially when aided by the wind, and form temporary lakes. When the waters subside, these Steppes, manured by the sediment, are mantled with verdure, and produce ananas, while occasional groups of fan palm-trees and mimosas skirt the rivers. When the dry weather returns, the grass is burnt to powder; the air is filled with dust raised by currents occasioned by difference of temperature, even when there is no wind. If by any accident a spark of fire falls on the scorched plains, a conflagration spreads from river to river, destroying every animal, and leaves the clayey soil sterile for years, till vicissitudes of weather crumble the brick-like surface into earth."

When this takes place, the rending of the indurated soil is sudden and violent, as if from the shock of an earthquake. If at such a time two opposing currents of air, whose conflict produces a rotatory motion, come in contact with the surface of the earth, the Llanos assume a strange and singular aspect. Like cone-shaped clouds, whose extremities seem to touch the ground, the sand rises through the rarefied air in the electrically-charged centre of the whirling current; like the sand-spouts of the Saharan Desert, or the waterspouts which formerly were the awe and dread of the mariner. Then does the lowering sky cast a "dim uncertain light," like a November fog in London, on the desolate plain. The horizon draws suddenly nearer; the Steppe seems to contract, and a nameless terror seizes the heart of the wanderer. The hot dusty air increases in suffocating heat; and the east wind, blowing over the long-heated soil, yields no refreshment, but rather oppresses with its burning glow. The pools, hitherto protected from evaporation by the yellow fading branches of the fan palm, begin to disappear. As in the north the animals grow torpid with the mortal cold, so under the influence of the parching drought the boa and the crocodile fall asleep, buried deeply in the dry mud. Everywhere the drought prevails, and yet everywhere the refracted rays of light delude the traveller with the image of gleaming lakes and rushing rivers. The distant palm bush hovers above the ground like a spectre, apparently raised by the influence of the contact of unequally heated, and, therefore, unequally dense strata

of air. Half hidden by the rolling clouds of dust, restless with the pangs of thirst and hunger, the horses and cattle roam around, the cattle dismally lowing, and the horses stretching out their long necks and snuffing the wind, in the hope some moister current may betray the neighbourhood of a not wholly failing pool. More sagacious and astute, the wary mule seeks a different mode of alleviating his thirst. Under its prickly envelope the melon-cactus conceals a watery pith. The mule first strikes the prickles aside with his fore-feet, and then cautiously approaches his lips to the plant and drinks the cool juice. But the experiment is not always without danger, and many animals are lamed by the spines of the cactus.

When the overpowering heat of the day is followed by the cooler temperature of the night, which is always of the same length in these latitudes, even then the cattle can obtain no repose. Enormous bats suck their blood like the fabled vampires during their sleep, or attach themselves to their backs, causing festering wounds in which mosquitoes, horse-flies, and a host of stinging insects, niche themselves. Thus the animals lead a weary life during the hot season. But at length, after the long drought and the parching glow, comes the welcome rain! Then takes place a transformation such as the fancy of the poet never surpassed or equalled. The deep blue of the hitherto unclouded sky grows lighter; the dark space in the constellation of the Southern Cross is hardly distinguishable at night; the soft phosphorescent lustre of the so-called Magellanic clouds "fades, fades, and falls away;" even the stars in Aquila and Ophiucus in the zenith beam with a tremulous and less planetary radiance. And lo, yonder in the south, a single cloud, like the peak of some remote mountain, soars perpendicularly from the horizon. Gradually the gathering vapours fold over the sky. Hark! The thunder is pealing in the distance, and louder and nearer come its awful reverberation. It heralds the life-restoring rain! Scarcely has the genial moisture refreshed earth, before a blessed fragrance breathes from the previously barren Steppe, and its nakedness is clothed upon with the bloom and beauty of a thousand grasses. The herbaceous mimosas, with renewed sensibility to the influence of light, open their drooping leaves to greet the rising sun; and the rosy-fingered morn is saluted with a glad chorus of birds, and by the opening blossoms of the water-plants. Now the horse bounds over the plain in keen ecstasy of spirit, and the cattle grazes plentifully on the fresh green herbage. Yet the new life is not without its peril. *„Anguis latet in herbâ."* Among the tall thick grass lurks the spotted jaguar, the tiger of the New World, and measures carefully the distance that separates him from his unsuspecting victim.

Sometimes (so say the natives) the moistened clay on the margin of the swamps will blister and swell slowly into a kind of mound until, with a violent noise, like the outbreak of a small mud volcano, the accumulated earth is cast high into the air. The spectator who comprehends the purport of this strange scene immediately retreats, for he knows that the birth of the portentous travail will be a gigantic water-snake or huge crocodile roused from its torpidity.

The rivers which bound the plain to the south--the Arauca, the Apure, and the Pajara--gradually swell, and now Nature compels the same animals, which in the first half of the year panted with thirst on the dry and dusty soil, to adopt an amphibious life. A portion of the Steppe

now assumes the aspect of a vast inland sea.[93] The brood mares retire with their foals to the more elevated banks, which rise like islands above the watery expanse. Every day the dry space grows smaller. It is a miniature reproduction of the Noachian Deluge. The animals, crowded together, swim about for hours in quest of other pasture, and feed sparingly on the tops of the flowering grasses that spring above the seething surface of the turbid waters. Many foals are drowned, and many are surprised by the crocodiles, killed by a blow from their powerful tails, and devoured. It is no uncommon thing to see the marks of these monsters' cruel teeth on the legs of horses and cattle which have narrowly escaped from their blood-thirsty jaws. Such a sight reminds the thoughtful observer of that capability of adaptation to the most varied circumstances with which the all-powerful Creator has endowed certain animals and plants.[94]

The Pampas of Pernambuco and Buenos Ayres have three times the superficial area of the Llanos of Venezuela. So great is their extent, that while forests of palms border them on the north, they are covered with snow in the south, during a great part of the year, like the northern Steppes of Tartary. According to the climatic divisions generally adopted, these regions belong to the Temperate Zone; but in truth they comprehend a great variety of climates. Their character is not less grand or original than that of the Llanos which precede them. "The Pampas," says an American writer, "surpass in majesty all the marvels of the new continent, and yet they astonish the traveller by the air of abandonment and sadness which is impressed upon them, especially in the low country watered by the Plata. Traces of life are there infrequent; still rarer are the objects which attract attention. Here, at the bottom of a crevasse, a cactus conceals its head bristling with spines; there, a solitary tree rises majestically toward heaven. Sometimes, upon the plain, the eye discovers the monstrous skeleton of an animal which flourished in those remote times when the Alps still slept in the depths of ocean, and dreamed not of blending their snow-burdened peaks with the clouds. The Pampas serve as the burial-place for races of gigantic men, now extinct, who seem to issue from their silent graves in testimony to the former being of vanished generations, and to bear witness to the Creator of all things. Above your head, and far away in the azure of heaven, you perceive a black point; it is a condor describing slowly its sinister circles. In the distance passes and disappears the ungainly figure of an ostrich. The inexpressible charm of these solitudes is their absolute freedom. And while traversing them the wayfarer comprehends the love with which they inspire the Indian, whose hope it is to meet beyond this world with yet vaster horizons for the indulgence of his wandering tastes."

At the southern extremity of South America spreads a sterile plain, sown with pebbles and blocks of porphyry: it is Patagonia. As we retrace our steps towards the north, the soil rises before us in terrace after terrace, till it reaches the base of the Cordilleras. In the northern districts the pebbly soil gives place to verdant meadows, where the Patagonians breed numerous herds of horses and cattle. Water is wanting in this country. The rains are rare, and the dry seasons very prolonged. The summer heat is overwhelming; in winter violent winds sweep the Savannahs, which are covered with nocturnal frosts. Under such climatic influences the soil produces only a dry coarse grass. In the interior a few beeches and cacti are met with, and then broad swamps, fringed with

reeds and rushes. In the spring a mantle of clover spreads over the earth, but only to be withered up by the first heats of summer.

Along the banks of the Rio Negro the Pampas of Buenos Ayres stretch from the coast of the Atlantic to the foot of the Andes. On a considerable portion of this vast area marshes of salt water encroach--a phenomenon all the more curious because the salt lies only on the surface, and all the wells artificially excavated yield fresh water. During the rains the low grounds are flooded; but as soon as the sun has dried up the plain, it is clothed in rich pasturage, while the elevated table-lands are dry and withered. There, too, the dryness is often attended with disastrous results. From 1827 to 1830, as Mr. Darwin records, not a drop of water fell; all traces of vegetation disappeared; the rivers ran dry, and the herds perished in incalculable numbers; in the single province of Buenos Ayres, the loss was estimated at more than a million head of cattle.

To the north of the Rio Salado, at the portals of the Andes, the country assumes a look of implacable desolation; no winds ever agitate the lower strata of the atmosphere. The water-courses which descend from the mountains lose themselves in the sand; salt marshes, whence the very birds hold aloof, alone alternate with a soil everywhere intersected by crevices. The district of the Pampas which stretches northward to the spurs of the Andes consists of a sandy soil, free from salt, but wholly unproductive. These solitudes, however, are ploughed by running streams, none of which communicate with the sea. They descend from the Andes, traverse the Pampas from east to west, and empty themselves into the saline lakes. Somewhat further to the north, and nearer the Equator, lies an almost unknown region of salt--a region of indescribable gloom, where neither tree, nor bush, nor blade of emerald grass, delights the eye. Eighteen months frequently elapse in this land of desolation, worthy of being one of the circles in Dante's "Inferno," without the cheering sound of a shower of rain, and when at length it arrives, it splits the rocks of salt and melts them into wide pools of brackish mud. As soon as the sun has absorbed the excessive humidity of the soil, myriads of salt crystals glitter on the surface, and convert the Desert into one immense mirror.

To the north-west of La Plata extends a desert of very different character--the _Despoblado_, or uninhabited land, a plateau of the Andes, rising some 4200 feet above the level of the sea. This desert is cloven into two portions by a deep valley, bordered with sharp rocks, which affords the only practicable route from Bolivia to Buenos Ayres. Winter, in this sombre world within a world, is a time of horror, when the spirit of Desolation goes to and fro in wrath unchained. Yet even here humanity drags about the fetters of existence. The traveller occasionally alights upon the wretched huts where the unfortunate descendants of the ancient Peruvians linger through life. Their wealth consists in a few llamas. Their occupation, in hunting the alpaca, the guanaco, and the chinchilla; in filtering the river sands for scanty grains of gold; in collecting salt, and disposing of it to the inhabitants of the nearest towns.

"The aspect of the Puna, or Despoblado," says Von Tschudi,[95] "is singularly monotonous and dreary. The expansive levels are scantily covered with grasses of a yellowish-brown hue, and are never enlivened by fresh-looking verdure. Here and there, at distant intervals, may be

seen a few stunted Quenera trees,[96] or large patches of ground covered with the Ratanbia shrub.[97] Both are used by the Indians as fuel, and for roofing their huts. The cold climate and sterile soil are formidable impediments to agriculture. Only one plant is cultivated in these regions with any degree of success. It is the _maca_, a tuberous root grown like the potato, and, like it, used as an article of food. In many of the Puna districts it constitutes the principal sustenance of the inhabitants. It has an agreeable and somewhat sweetish flavour, and when boiled in milk it tastes like the chestnut."

The most imposing spectacle presented by the Deserts of South America is that of their frequent hurricanes. As the Simoom to the Sahara, so is the Pampero to the Pampas. Its approach is foretold by signs which the native's experienced eye readily recognizes. All at once the air seems stricken motionless, and over the solitude broods a solemn silence. A cloud white and light as snow--a cloud "no bigger than a man's hand"--rises in the south-west. It advances, and as it advances enlarges its proportions. Other clouds appear, and all gather into one imposing mass. The dust rises and whirls round in thick columns suspended between heaven and earth. Lower and lower descend the congregated vapours, until they envelop the earth in a funeral shroud, whose folds the hurricane incessantly agitates, and which the forked lightnings seem to rend in fragments. Suffocating gusts of a fiery wind traverse space. And now the sudden tempest stoops down from the summit of the Andes, and sweeps the Savannah with resistless fury. Enormous masses of sand, upgathered by the _rafale_, obscure the clearness of day; at noon the earth is covered with a darkness that may be felt. The thunder mingles its roar with the strident voices of the storm. All that lives, all that breathes, is at the mercy of the unchained elements, which are as pitiless in their wrath as a roused people. Thousands of animals perish in the Savannahs; and prostrate, with his face to the earth, man tremblingly awaits the expiring breath of the grand convulsion!

The horses and cattle of Europe are replaced in the Pampas of South America by the herds of guanacos and llamas which covered them at the epoch of the Spanish conquest. Their owners, descendants of the Spaniards intermingled with the native races, possess many of the characteristics of the Arab.

Like the llanero of Venezuela, the guacho of the Pampas realizes the idea of the ancient centaur; and from the throne of his saddle, to which hangs the inseparable _lasso_, he surveys the plains where he is lord and king with the fiery glance of a free and independent spirit. He owes scant allegiance to any established authority, and under the blue sky of heaven enjoys the blessings of uncontrolled freedom. And what to him the fever and turmoil of civilization, when, mounted on his noble steed, he can roam at will, with none to say him nay, over leagues and leagues of grassy prairies!

VAIN SUITORS

by Robert J. C. Stead
from *Songs of the Prairie*
EBook #35475

You may tell in fondest phrases
How Venetian glory raises
Sunlit domes and basking marbles as her streets flow to the sea;
Sing of Florence or Geneva
Or the Bay of Naples; weave a
Web of sentiment--but leave a
Little sentiment for me.

Where the warm Atlantic waters
Lave your laughing sons and daughters
By a hundred sunny cities where her tides flow full and free,
Or on Caribbean beaches
While the water pulls and reaches
At your heart-strings--in your speeches
Save a sentiment for me.

San Francisco's golden fulgor,
Catalina's horticulture,
Every symphony of gladness, every gaiety there be;
Every land and every nation
Somewhere claim your admiration:
From your meed of approbation
Save your fealty to me.

* * * * *

Cloudless skies and peerless weather
Link my hearts and homes together
And the crisp, pure air of Winter vitalizes blood and brain;
Prairie breezes softly blowing,
Wheat fields' rustle--cattle lowing--
Broader visions coming--growing--
Woo, O lands, ye woo in vain!